DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 168 378 HE 010 921

AUTHOR	Teichler, Ulrich
TITLE	Admission to Higher Education in the United States. A German Critique.
INSTITUTION	International Council for Educational Development, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Volkswagen Foundation, Hanover (West Germany).
PUB DATE	78
NOTE	144p.; For related documents see HE 010 920, HE 010 933, HE 010 935, HE 010 967
AVAILABLE FROM	Interbook, Inc., 13 E. 16th St., New York, NY 10003
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; Admission Criteria; *College Admission; *College Entrance Examinations; Comparative Education; Competitive Selection; *Equal Education; *Higher Education; Objective Tests; *Open Enrollment; Undergraduate Study
IDENTIFIERS	*United States

ABSTRACT

As part of a study of access and admission to higher education in Germany and the United States, a German specialist was invited to critique the American system of access to higher education, especially admission testing and open admission. The author's objective is to present selected problems related to objective testing within the framework of admission to higher education and to open admissions in the U.S., and to interpret these problems in the context of German experiences. Of primary concern is admission to undergraduate study; graduate and professional education receive only limited consideration. It is suggested that while objective tests have a certain usefulness whenever the criteria for judging achievement in the schools vary widely and the higher education system is hierarchical, tests play a role in the U.S. greater than can be explained on this basis. From one point of view it is argued that objective testing can be eliminated in the U.S. Three thematic issues in open admissions are addressed: the limits of openness; the coexistence of open and selective admissions, and the problems it creates; and procedures in open admissions. A bibliography is included. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED168378

ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

A German Critique

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

ICED

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ULRICH TEICHLER

International Council for Educational Development
Access to Higher Education Number 4

HE 010 921

The preparation of this study was supported by the German-U.S. Study Group on Access to Higher Education, the International Council for Educational Development, The German Fulbright Commission, and The Max Planck Institute for Educational Research. The English translation was prepared by Michael Buckley, an International Programs staff member of the University of Massachusetts.

Copyright © 1978 by the
International Council for Educational Development
ISBN No. 0-89192-218-0
Printed in the United States of America

Distributed by Interbook Incorporated, 13 East 16th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003

CONTENTS

Foreword
I Introduction 1
II The Role of Admissions Testing 7
III Factors Easing Decision Making 11
IV Framing Admissions Policy 23
V Limitations of Testing 39
VI Latent Functions of Testing 55
VII Additional Debate on Objective Testing 63
VIII Open Admissions: Introduction 73
IX Open Admissions: Who Should Go to College? 77
X Open and Selective Admissions 91
XI Admissions Criteria and Procedures 111
XII Conclusion 121
References 127
Appendix: Study Group Membership 143
Publications of German-U.S. Study Group

FOREWORD

In 1975 the International Council for Educational Development organized a comparative study of access policy and admissions practice with respect to higher education in the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States. This study, financed by a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation, was supervised by a joint German-U.S. Study Group, chaired by James A. Perkins, chairman of ICED, and directed by Barbara B. Burn, director of International Programs at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The final Study Group report will be issued in 1978.

During the course of the study, a number of special papers were commissioned and several conference reports were prepared. While all these documents made important contributions to the deliberations and final report, a few of them have such universal interest that it was decided to print them as part of the publication program of the access study.

As the Study Group was equally concerned with Germany and the United States, it early decided to commission a German critique of access in the U.S., especially of two increasingly controversial aspects—objective testing and open admissions. Dr. Ulrich Teichler of the Max-Planck-Institüt für Bildungsforschung agreed to undertake this critique. Dr. Teichler's analysis offers provocative insights into the American scene, and should contribute significantly to the ongoing debate on access. His study affirms the usefulness of comparative studies in bringing a wider perspective to higher education.

While the access study was basically a German-U.S. project, the problems examined are surely universal. For this reason it is hoped that this important document will be of interest and use to all those concerned with the pressing problem of providing an orderly and just system of access to higher education.

James A. Perkins
Chairman
International Council for
Educational Development

I
INTRODUCTION

Upon observing the current discussion in the United States on admission to higher education, one is immediately struck by the comparatively slight concern with the problems related to it. Questions dealing with admissions seem to trouble students and their families, educators, politicians and researchers in the U.S. less than do, for example, the pros and cons of *numerus clausus* in the Federal Republic of Germany (hereafter referred to as Germany) or in Japan the effects of the admission system upon the school and upon personality development.[1]

Many American experts—members of college admissions offices, testing institutes, governmental agencies, etc.—react with a knowing smile to the foreign observer's query as to the problem of admissions testing for higher education. They are aware of the pros and cons of the individual procedures and criteria, and of their manifold effects; major changes are normally considered to be neither pressing nor probable. High school students as a rule also seem to accept the conditions of selective admission. Questions of open admission, to be sure, are discussed in a more lively manner—the concern of the higher education institutions regarding adequate enrolment numbers and governmental financing plays a by no means insignificant role here. But many Americans, rather than considering the elemental questions bound up in this matter, appear prepared to comfort themselves with the conviction that the diversified

U.S. higher education system, decentralized in terms of social control and partially regulated by a market mechanism, in its present form more or less meets society's needs.

This does not mean that the present situation in the U.S. is accepted fully. A massive criticism of testing and grading is no rarity in the book market and in conversations. Questions exercising a strong influence on admission policies—whether college attendance is worthwhile and what effect it has on the distribution of life chances—attract much attention. The social significance of the theme seem to press researchers into continually taking passionate stands on the role of education in the allotment of chances in life. The concept regretfully advanced by educators that in recent decades more and more students have come to regard higher education attendance instrumentally as a prerequisite for higher social positions and concern themselves less with the substance of the education itself, is confirmed by trends in book publication. Thus, whereas previously complaints that life at the universities was not very inspiring still received attention, now it is the apocalyptic accounts regarding the job market for graduates which fall on responsive ears. In conversations one encounters a broad consciousness of problems and a wealth of varying perspectives on the most important aspects of admissions. At times one may be inclined to regard the often all-too-pragmatic view of problems as being inappropriate; in every case the spectrum of varying positions appears to be very wide. One is above all inclined to admire the highly variegated attempts to deal with inadequacies through completely different measures at the individual institutions of higher education.

But these signs of concern are pale in comparison to the debates in West Germany over the current crisis in admissions policy or the often resigned criticism in Japan. This difference in mood leads to the question: are the problems of higher education admission in the U.S. resolved so much more satisfactorily, or are they being systematically underestimated?

Above and beyond this question, upon observing the discussion in the U.S. regarding higher education admission problems, the foreigner is amazed at how little information on corresponding problems in other countries is available and at how little most people seem to value such information for the evaluation of their own situation. One does encounter notable exceptions to be sure, but many Americans find the differences between the individual states in the U.S. to be exciting enough so that international comparisons offer little, as (in their view) they find themselves on the pinnacle of international trends in education anyway.

These first impressions are in a sense encouraging for the foreign observer who wishes to present to Americans his own evaluation of the American situation. One need not fear that because of the variety and breadth of the discussion in the U.S., it is possible to formulate only long-known impressions and arguments.

The purpose of this study is to present selected problems related to objective testing within the framework of admission to higher education and to "open admission" in the U.S., and to interpret these problems in the context of this observer's personal experiences. Admission to the undergraduate level will receive primary treatment; selected aspects of admissions to graduate and professional schools will receive only limited consideration.

The impetus for this study was given by the German-U.S. Study Group on Access to Higher Education, which has as its goal to contribute to the consideration in both countries of changes in access to higher education by means of information, mutual counseling, and a common statement of positions based on these experiences.[2] This study directs itself primarily to the American audience in the hope of introducing the experience of foreign observers into the discussions going on among Americans themselves. In the selection of themes and the description of problems discussed, it takes its German readers into account as well.

The focal point in the preparation of this study was a seven-week tour in the United States in October-November 1976.[3] Preparations were additionally based on a valuable and detailed analysis of the public system of higher education in Massachusetts, also sponsored by the German-U.S. Study Group.[4] The analysis was supplemented by several months' study of pertinent literature,[5] and by experience with corresponding problems in Germany and Japan,[6] gathered in research on the changing social function of higher education in the process of educational expansion and especially on the changing relationships between the educational and the occupational systems.

Several considerations gained from my previous research were for two reasons also included in the discussion of my experiences in the U.S. First, the problems of admissions tests appear to me to be discussed all too often as purely technical problems in the context of given conditions in the admissions system—this is true in part for the U.S. and especially for Germany. By contrast, my analysis will mainly ask to what extent the role of tests in the admissions system can be explained by the general expectations which society places on this system. Secondly, notwithstanding the widespread assumption that it is in the U.S. that the problems of higher education admission in a society having mass education are visible *par excellence,* alternatives based on Japan will also be shown in order to point up the strengths and weaknesses of American solutions.

In discussing problems of objective testing, the thesis will be presented that while tests possess a certain usefulness whenever the criteria for judging achievement in the schools vary widely and the higher education system is hierarchical, tests play a role in the U.S. clearly greater than can be explained on this basis. Advancing from the hypothesis that in many other countries the strong interest in standardized elements in access to higher education relates to making admissions decisions appear fair and evident and legitimizing the decision as "just," it will be argued that from this perspective such tests can be dispensed with in the U.S. This will be demonstrated by means of a critical presentation of factors which can ease decisions at the moment of admission to higher education, and a discussion of the latitude of individual institutions of higher learning in making decisions, as well as the role tests play in the framework of different sorts of admission criteria and procedures. This will be followed by tentative theses which I propose as a way of explaining the value placed on tests in the U.S.—which in the face of the preceding discussion is surprisingly great. The conclusion of this first part will treat several other problems of objective testing.

The critique of "open admissions" will attempt to distinguish amidst the jungle of propagandistic vocabulary what is understood in the U.S. by this concept and the problems it raises. Three thematic areas will be investigated. First, several arguments will be presented which play a role in the U.S. in answering the question: for whom should the higher education system be open, or rather where do the limits to openness lie? Second, those problems of open admission will be treated which arise from the coexistence of open and selective admissions. The unqualified defense of the present "diversified system" will be criticized, as well as the latter's insufficient intelligibility for potential applicants. Finally, several problems of admission procedures in "open admissions" will be discussed and some personal impressions of the debate on open admission will be presented.

---

1. Burn (1977b, p. 11) speaks of a "highly competitive admissions situation" in Germany and Japan—in contrast to the situation in the U.S.

2. See on this matter the program of the German-U.S. Study Group on Access to Higher Education 1975, as well as the first intermediary account of the discussion in Burn 1976, 1977b, and Karpen 1976.
3. The task of itinerary planning was assumed by Barbara B. Burn (German-U.S. Study Group) and Margot U. Marino (International Council for the Exchange of Scholars). The great hospitality and willingness to provide information shown by the many persons consulted greatly facilitated the preparation of this study. Ernest N. Beals, Barbara B. Burn, Donald J. Calista, Oluf M. Davidsen, Dietrich Goldschmidt, Jerome Karabel, Nigar J. Siddiqui, William W. Turnbull, and David E. Wiley in particular provided important suggestions. Essential to this study were, finally, the common discussion of experiences and the many suggestions and critiques of my colleagues, Dirk Hartung and Reinhard Nuthmann.
4. This study was directed by Barbara B. Burn. The two analyses of Ernest W. Beals (1976) and Nigar J. Siddiqui (1976) provided important survey material. For this reason examples are often drawn from Massachusetts in this study.
5. References to the conversations are made in the text, especially when (a) they illustrate particular problems, (b) important arguments for discussion were raised in them not found in the standard literature, and (c) in the face of controversies in the public discussion they provided the occasion for considering a particular position to be the more plausible. References to the literature appear only seldom as systematic documentation; they are chiefly for readers who wish to inform themselves more closely on a particular set of themes.
6. In the context of special papers on access to higher education, the paper Teichler 1976b was distributed by the ICED.

II

THE ROLE OF ADMISSIONS TESTING

The conception is widespread that the role of standardized measurement of the characteristics of applicants to higher education is primarily shaped by two structural presumptions of the educational system: a much higher number of applicants than study places in specific sectors of the higher education system and in its entirety, and the existence of varying scales of judging achievement—largely caused by an institutional variety and hierarchy—in secondary schools. Objective and standardized tests appear to be an especially useful solution because they provide a common yardstick. This "technical" argument for the tests was often advanced by Germans concerned with the introduction of tests into Germany.[1]

Such structural givens provide, of course, the prerequisite for tests to be a useful aid in higher education admission. The observable differences in discussion concerning higher education admission in various industrialized countries, however, in my estimation make clear that such structural givens do not explain the need for unified measuring tools such as tests.

If one chooses as a starting point the discussion in Germany concerning the introduction of tests and the conditions for entrance exams in Japan (which, though offered by the individual institutions of higher education, are nonetheless very similar in their "philosophy"), one comes to the conclusion that tests are considered necessary whenever a strong pressure to legitimize a "just" selection weighs upon the admissions system. Tests are considered an especially appropriate instrument when the admissions system is exposed to a strong social demand that it be attuned to particular principles of selection—such as justice in competition, foreseeable success in studies and profession, equality in life chances—that it meet with public acceptance of such principles, that it establish criteria and procedures adequate to such principles, and finally that it be understandable as a whole.

As objective testing plays an important role in the U.S., one would expect there to be corresponding pressure on this type of testing to legitimize itself. However, the opposite appears to be the case. In comparing various industrialized countries it appears that in this respect the most radical differences exist between Germany and the U.S.

My observation of the various social conditions would seem to justify the following thesis. A strong societal demand for the admissions system to be just arises when severe restrictions are placed on access to higher education and differing standards of measuring achievement are applied. In particular this happens (a) when the decision on access is viewed as being very influential in the distribution of societal rewards, (b) when notions of the goals and benefits of higher education are relatively homogeneous, and (c) when relatively great public responsibility is assumed to exist for the distribution of societal rewards, the access to which is facilitated by college attendance in general, attendance at prestigious institutions, or degrees in particularly desirable subjects.

In Germany these three conditions for a strong demand for legitimacy have long been present. In recent years there have also developed corresponding restrictions on access to higher education and, to a degree, varying standards of measuring achievement at the secondary school level. The result was a more urgent demand for the introduction of standardized selection procedures.

In the U.S., there has been a tradition of access restrictions and varying standards of measurement in schools, but access to higher education appears relatively unburdened, notions of goals not very uniform, and public responsibility for the results of higher education admission limited.

Were one to see the function of testing as lying primarily in such aid to legitimization, and were the differences in this respect between the U.S. and Germany as great as first appears, then one could claim that objective testing could be abolished in the U.S. without causing great problems for the admission system. By contrast in Germany problems of the admissions system could become unendurable should standardized testing not soon be introduced.

Such a proposition is doubtless an overstatement. For the German situation it must be added that these conditions by no means represent an inevitable course of affairs. Political alternatives are being discussed: a lessening of restrictions on higher education access by means of planning, the distribtuion of the most competitive study slots by lottery, or measures in the employment system to reduce social inequality.

For the analysis of what role objective testing plays in the U.S., the above thesis, although exaggerated, offers a useful starting point. Are not these tests dispensable in a system of higher education admission in which legitimization through testing does not appear to be necessary? Are the related problems which the tests unleash so serious that a renunciation of them is indicated? Does admission in the diversified American higher education system in fact involve more expectations in terms of guaranteeing procedural equality, "justice" and comprehensibility in selection than is commonly assumed? If tests appear to be largely or completely dispensable, why do they play a relatively significant role? Has a tradition become self-perpetuating? Does such an admissions system, less burdened by significant and relatively uniform expectations, have still other functions than those previously considered?

Proceeding from these questions, the study will first investigate factors which ease or limit the pressures on selection at the point of access to higher education and how far this process goes. It examines what room for action the individual institutions have in shaping their admission criteria and practices. Finally, it assesses the extent to which tests appear dispensable in the framework of current criteria and practices, and explores possible functions of objective testing other than those already discussed. A number of critiques of objective testing are also discussed.

---

1. In Germany narrow passageways develop in access to certain disciplines; the institutional hierarchy of schools and institutions of higher education does not appear, however, to be nearly so great as in the U.S. The slighter differences in the level of schools give rise to the supposition that in Germany, tests would supply less in the way of useful information—over and above the school grades—than in the U.S.

III

FACTORS EASING DECISION MAKING

The Effect of the Structural Characteristics of the Education System

Decisions on access to higher education are eased by various structural characteristics of the educational system. Although in the U.S. selectivity at the transition from secondary school to higher education is statistically very great (Cerych and Furth 1971), a large number of high school graduates do not enter college (Golladay 1976), and the choice of the individual institution is very important for those beginning college. The selection process seems to involve less competitive pressure than in many countries where almost all those entitled to enter higher education actually do so. Mitigating the problem is the fact that a certain measure of selection is already carried out in high school. The probability of attending college at all, and in particular in the competitive fields within the higher education system, depends upon the course-track attended, the quality of the high school and one's relative standing within the graduating class. Second, the prestige hierarchy of institutions is not as pronounced in U.S. higher education as, for example, in Japan. Thus, a series of institutions are regarded as equal in rank; they have a broader spectrum of goals. Finally, underneath the famous universities there exist regional "markets" of postsecondary educational institutions which may not always fit into a clear-cut hierarchy.

Third, between enrollment at an institution of higher learning and graduation from it, often lie many decisions which underscore a certain provisional character of selection to higher education in particular, frequent monitoring of course work which often leads to a termination of studies in the first two years at colleges or universities. A "multilevel" system has also developed in the U.S. more than in other countries (Clark 1977), in which the decision to complete one's studies is divided among various stages. The choice of a major remains open for the majority of those students beginning a four-year course of studies. This generally follows after two years, and for the more desirable professional areas this decision is only finalized after four years of college. There is also a series of (often overestimated) possibilities for "rising" within the course of study: in recent years the possibilities for graduates of junior and community colleges to have their credits fully recognized towards a four-year degree have been strengthened.[1] Success in community college is decisive in this admission process and not test results and high school grades. The possibility also exists for recipients of bachelor's degrees from less renowned four-year colleges to transfer to graduate courses at more renowned universities. One can also assume that in recent years it has become more acceptable for a student to interrupt his studies for a period of time and resume them at another institution (Kesselman 1976).

Underestimation of the Importance of the Admissions Decision

The competition for access to higher education and the pressure on entrance criteria and procedures with regard to legitimization are also mitigated by the fact that high school students tend to underestimate the importance of admission to a particular institution. As is discussed in Chapter X, the majority of high school graduates and other applicants appear to have only a vague picture of the "quality" of the diverse institutions of higher education. Moreover, it is my impression that the final credentials a person achieves are predetermined upon entrance to a particular college to a greater degree than one might be led to expect from the formal opportunities for transfer and reentry and compensatory study programs.[2] Thus, many students overestimate their chances of making a later correction. In light of the market mechanisms currently operating in the system of higher education, the majority of universities appear to have a vested interest in maintaining such a distorted view among applicants while attempting to assure themselves a sufficient number of well-qualified applicants. False propaganda is indirectly supported by public financing, as the public universities which have declining numbers of students are quickly hit by harsh financial sanctions and the greater part of federal subventions for private universities is "transported" by the students to the institutions (Rice 1977, p. 27).

Notions of the Relationship between Higher Education and Employment

The relationship between study and employment in the U.S. contributes to easing pressure on selection for access to higher education. This involves indirect reward according to the type or "quality" of credential; mobility; relation between education and income; and finally the auxiliary benefits of obtaining college or university-level education.

In the U.S. the reward for college credentials does not appear to follow as regularly as in most other highly industrialized countries. There are fewer employment sectors (such as public service in Germany) for which a college or university degree represents an indispensable prerequisite for access to positions of rank. According to a Supreme Court decision, recruitment on the basis of educational certification is considered discrimination (Huff 1974).

Furthermore, in the U.S. as in other countries with a very high enrollment in higher education, a college or university degree appears to be a less-than-sufficient prerequisite for access to higher occupational positions. The status of the institution attended does not seem to determine the desired occupational position as strongly as once was the case. Finally, due to the tradition of a liberal arts education and the emphasis on many nonacademic and nonprofessional goals in college education, study in the U.S. is less often a preparation for specific types of professions,than, for example, West Germany.

In the U.S., much more than in other countries, college graduates who land in a job that fails to meet their expectations can hope to rectify the situation through occupational mobility. It cannot be clearly established whether occupational mobility is essentially greater in the U.S. than in other industrialized countries, but one can assume that change of job and previous work in little regarded positions is less often negatively evaluated than in other countries. However, hopes that the disadvantages accrued by attendance at a particular college can be compensated by later job advancement are clearly exaggerated, for on the whole educational level and occupational position tend to correlate more closely the longer a person has been engaged in professional activity (Solmon 1973, Solmon and Wachtel 1975).

In recent years research findings on the relationship between social background and later income and occupational status have more frequently been interpreted as proof of the assumption that a college degree "does not make much of a difference." Several economists emphasize that the advantages in income for such graduates, as opposed to persons with other types of educational experiences, rapidly diminishes (Freeman and Holloman 1975), that the demand for such graduates will sharply decline

(Dresch 1975), that more and more often college graduates are taking over activities for which they are "overqualified" (O'Toole 1975), and that education is losing its importance as a path towards upward mobility (Freeman 1976).[3] Several sociologists and psychologists emphasize especially that inequality of opportunity in the educational system has in the course of time scarcely diminished (Jencks *et al.* 1972, Davis 1976). They assert that the observable correlation between college attendance and occupation is not determined by one's studies but rather by factors such as social background or heredity, or are relativized by more or less accidental influences during one's career (Jencks *et al.* 1972, Sewell and Hauser 1975).[4]

To be sure, there exist important objections to these studies and also many studies which allow for opposite conclusions.[5] Many of the studies also leave scientific terrain in contending that attendance at a college or university is not worthwhile. But they have unquestionably been taken up in the mass media and in public debate much more strongly than the opposing views, as they reflect and strengthen a growing public aversion to equality of opportunity and the expansion of education. Regardless of how strong is the influence of the view put forward by social scientists, developments in the job market and in the relationship between higher education and the occupational system—or at any rate the interpretation of such developments—seem to be inducing many potential applicants to give up plans of study or to be less concerned about which college or university they attend. This reduces the pressure on admission decisions.

The assumption that occupational opportunities for college and university graduates are worsening also leads many high school students to exert themselves all the more for access to the most competitive schools and fields of study. In this connection, it is interesting to note that most university people do not contradict the thesis that college or university degrees are of little value with regard to income and status.

Instead of matching the job-related motives and status aspirations of prospective students in order to secure more applicants, and instead of presenting plausible counterarguments for debate, they as a rule emphasize other individual and societal "benefits," and thus indirectly give support to the exaggerated theses. People in the institutions of higher learning often even appear relieved by these theses and propagate them themselves–not least because they hope for greater freedom in academic programs and that these programs will not be directly oriented to utility.

In addition, a broad understanding of the educational goals of higher education institutions takes some of the burden off selection for access to higher education. In the U.S. more than in most other industrialized countries, it is regarded as an explicit goal of the institution that along with dispensing knowledge it should also be an important socializing agency and offer students an interesting study period (Lenning 1974). Such an understanding of goals softens the hierarchy among colleges, for less prestigious institutions are often accepted as good agencies for socialization. In personal conversations it was often emphasized to me, for example, that one can find many "social retards" at famous universities.[6]

In conclusion, the competition for access to higher education is held within limits. It is less than one might expect in light of the total number of high school graduates compared with the number of those beginning college studies, the great differences in prestige among institutions, and the continuing correlation between education and income or socioeconomic status. Contributing to taking the pressure off admissions decisions is the fact that there is not the more or less automatic progression, beginning at college admission and running through graduation into a career, as in many countries. This often causes applicants to underestimate how strongly their future path is predetermined with the beginning of their study program at a particular institution. Beyond this applicants are exposed to massive propaganda which is aimed at just this sort of underestimation; many higher education institutions are involved in this propaganda to a considerable degree.[7] Finally, admission selection is also eased by the fact that students lay great value upon the benefits of a college or university education which go beyond the transmission of knowledge and better occupational prospects.

The large number of first-year students able to attend the college or university of their choice shows the extent to which colleges and universities are relieved of pressure in their decisions on admissions. It is estimated that over 80% of those applying are able to enroll immediately,[8] and that of those not enrolling, only a minority are rejected by the institution first on their list of preferences. In 1976 77% of college freshmen stated that they were enrolled in the college first on their list; 44% had applied to only one school (Astin, King and Richardson 1976, p. 50).

This state of affairs led some of my informants to contend that the decision regarding access to an institution of higher learning is not made primarily by the institution but results from "self-selection." This euphemistic term not only glosses over the manifold mechanisms which discourage students from application, but also does not sufficiently take account of the effect of competition for admission to the most attractive fields in higher education. The term, however, supports the assumption that the admission process is probably exposed to fewer definite expectations and constraints when the number of persons directly rejected by it is small.

The easing of competition for access to higher education is also affected by a conception very widespread in less prestigious institutions, namely, that the quality of a college or university education cannot be measured on the basis of the input or output of the institutions, but rather on the "value added,"[9] which the students receive from the individual institution. This notion ascribes the reasons for the variety and the differences in level among the institutions not so much to their differing goals but asserts that the less highly regarded universities can compete with the prestigious ones on equal grounds in the relative advancement of students. It claims that the superiority of the famous institutions is illusory as soon as one takes into account the differences in student level evident at the beginning of studies.

In this context a more modest goal often appears to be better for the student if one can assume that he or she will profit more from attending a personally more suitable institution than one that is too demanding, and hence the student receives less there and possibly breaks off studies entirely. Thus, many directors of college admissions offices emphasize that most teachers and high school advisors strive to give honest grades and truly honest recommendations for their pupils, as they generally believe that the high school student is not well served by admission to an institution of higher learning which would overtax his or her capabilities.[10]

The easing of pressure on selection at the point of admission to higher education by means of a "multilevel system" is achieved at the price of burdening higher education with later selection. Colleges and universities must contend with a delayed selection and the tensions which attend such decisions. At some universities, for example, more than 90% of freshmen [illegible] to specialize in medicine; of those, after two years [illegible] less than 30% will actually be accepted into premedical courses or in other fields in which the hope of medical study can still be maintained; after four years perhaps less than 10% will be admitted into medical school. In one case, I was assured that over one half of the dropouts (which amounted to approximately 50% in this institution) resulted from nonadmission to premedical courses. Problems of this nature–to be sure in milder form–are to be observed in almost all areas of higher education.

In order to strengthen the interest of students in the education offered and to limit dropouts, colleges and universities are forced to actively dampen student expectations. Such a "cooling out" function was earlier filled mainly by the junior and community colleges (Clark 1960) which today, however, have to a certain extent "turning on" or "warming up" effects (cf., for example, Brue, Eugen and Maxey 1971; Snyder 1972). Today the cooling-out efforts are principally directed towards students who desire to attend graduate and professional schools. At several universities, for example, standards are deliberately kept artificially high in premedical courses–in relation to the actual requirements for medical study–and the grading is harsh so that both act as a fearful deterrent.

Colleges and universities are often not averse to assuming such tasks of reorientation. First year students are often regarded as not yet ready to decide on a study major;[11] tacit acceptance is given to heavy competitive pressure. Moreover, many college and university teachers welcome the chance to acquaint students with a field they had not known and to awaken their interest, especially since student motivation at the beginning of their studies is often imposed by the parents and is too little oriented to the values of higher education. But many persons consulted for this study characterized this situation as burdensome for higher education, and student guidance was judged to be often manipulative.

---

1. In California and Florida the provisional nature of the choice at the beginning of studies is even greater, as there the great majority of students wishing to achieve at least the bachelor's degree first

attend a community college and thereafter an upper-division college.

2. See Karabel's analysis of the literature on this subject done in 1976, as well as Astin 1976.
3. See the review of requirement and college attendance forecasts in the 1975 Report by the Carnegie Foundation and the summary of arguments relating to the economics of education in Windham 1976.
4. Cf. Karabel's 1976 critical summation of the discussion.
5. Cf. for example the discussion on the economics of education in Gordon 1974 and Carnegie Commission 1973, the discussion of various sociological and economic studies by Karabel 1976 and Solmon 1973, as well as the critique of Jencks *et al.* 1972 in Farrell 1973 and Husén 1974.
6. Even an institution which survives only by means of a very aggressive advertising and the most varied promises and which—as local rumor would have it—accepts every applicant who "is still breathing," is able to advertise that, thanks to the heterogeneity of those enrolled, it is able to offer important social experiences to each student which the more homogeneous elite universities cannot offer.
7. Many institutions of higher learning emphasize, to be sure, the importance of study for one's career, and many students begin their studies with exaggerated expectations of professional "benefits," but the influence of prestige differences among the institutions is rather underemphasized; it is exactly on this point where a change could sharpen competition on access to higher education.
8. According to a 1970 study, 14.5% of high school graduates in Massachusetts who wished to study did not enroll. Among other factors, rejection by the colleges and universities may have played a role, as many of these applicants had a score of less than 400 in the verbal part of the SAT tests; nine tenths of public institutions of higher learning in Massachusetts set 400 points as a prerequisite for admission (cf. Siddiqui 1976, pp. 48-53).
9. Cf. the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education 1973a, p. 3, Menacker 1975, p. 88, sketches it as a concept "whereby quality is determined more by what a college does for the students it enrolls and less by the characteristics of entering students." According to Astin 1976, the logically consistent application of this principle demands a renunciation of different admission standards from college to college.
10. The "honesty" of the teachers is of double importance for objective testing for admission to higher education. It eases the pressure on the tests as the institutions of higher education can base their decision on admission on the recommendations of

the teachers. It also makes easier the administration of the tests as the teachers frequently supervise the tests on commission from the testing institutes. While the testing institutes emphasize that this practice is carried out with almost no difficulties, someone who was responsible for the administration of a test widely used in only one state alluded to great problems in this practice. In this context the judgment "honest" has a one-sided moral quality as with such recommendations the teachers also face the question of whether they wish to be responsible for the allotment of learning opportunities in higher education and chances in life.

11. "Proof" of this thesis is evidenced in the high proportion of changing majors during the first two years of study—often over 50%—although such a tendency is in fact promoted by fear-deterrent mechanisms and other reorientation efforts of the institutions.

IV
FRAMING ADMISSIONS POLICY

When one investigates the latitude the individual institutions of higher learning enjoy in the determination of admission criteria and procedures, it becomes evident that the structural givens for an effective employment of objective testing and the expectations of a "just" selection influence the admission policy of the individual institution only to a limited extent.

Competence for Admissions

Normally the individual institution is in charge of the entire range of admissions: the determination of admission prerequisites, criteria, and procedures; the administration of the procedure; and the final decisions on selection. The individual colleges and universities regard their freedom of decision in admissions as one of the most important elements of their autonomy for in conformity with their goals they tend to value certain characteristics of the applicants, just as, conversely, the composition of the student body influences the character of the institution. Even if the breadth of variation in the goals of the various institutions enters only partly into admissions procedures, the competency of the individual schools in admissions normally is considered a nonnegotiable element in the preservation of diversity in higher education. It is only admission to medical studies which presents a clear exception in this regard.[1]

In this freedom of decision enjoyed by the institutions there are certain limits. There are states in the U.S. which

28

value the introduction of general principles in the admissions policies of the public colleges and universities. Some states favor an almost complete control over admission; the majority, however, prefer a certain coordination. In Massachusetts, for example, almost all the public universities accept only those applicants who have scored at least 400 points in the verbal part of the SAT (Siddiqui 1976). As the federal and state offices responsible for higher education have come under increasing pressure since the beginning of the 1970s—partly due to financial problems, partly because of the general growing criticism directed at higher education—these agencies become more inclined towards a strong coordination of higher education.

Many representatives of the schools lament this development as a loss of autonomy. The response of public officials to this position does not, however, seem unjustified insofar as even without their coordinating influence, admissions procedures were not as varied as one might expect from all the talk about the diversified system.

Second, the expense of differentiated procedures limits the breadth of variation in admissions. The public colleges and universities in particular are inclined to simplify procedures, as they can hardly require their applicants to meet the costs of elaborate procedures. Often a compromise between rationalization and maneuverability in making decisions is reached. The procedures are largely centralized, but the decision on the criteria to be applied and their relative weight, as well as the final choice of candidates, is left to the individual colleges.[2]

In the private institutions there are also noticeable efforts towards a rationalization of admission, but in general it is amazing to see what elaborate procedures are practiced in many institutions. To some degree this is accepted due to the advertising effects of an elaborate procedure. For example, the participation of alumni in interviewing has the effect of keeping alive the memory of the alma mater, and is well understood as an important impetus for alumni donations. The alumni as a rule assume this service free of charge, not least because of the generally justified hope that the alma mater will later turn a favorable eye on the applications of their own children or those of their acquaintances. In addition, the applicants, or their respective teachers and advisors, come into closer contact with the institution through an elaborate admission procedure. This may play a decisive role in the decision on the part of many students in that the student may perhaps get a better impression of the university that concerns itself with the applicant in so differentiated a fashion during the admission process.[3] The advertising effect is considered to be so important that in many instances the procedure is inflated for this very purpose. In addition, elaborate admissions procedures are more easily accepted because the gathering of information for admission (this applies for public institutions as well) also serves other administrative functions such as the maintenance of student files, course registration, scholarship and financial aid matters, counseling and institutional research.

Third, decentralized admission is criticized for the burden placed upon students. For many potential applicants who are uncertain both in their expectations and in their dealings related to higher education, or who even experience difficulties filling out the forms, the application procedure is a frightening deterrent—not least because they know that how the application looks also enters into the evaluation of candidates (cf. Zuker and Hegener 1976, p. 53). This causes many to apply to fewer institutions than would seem sensible in terms of a rational approach to getting into college, and has the effect of increasing social inequality.

In recent years students' application has been facilitated at many colleges in that much information is obtained by means of questionnaires provided by the testing institutes, and in that different institutions offer joint forms which, in some cases, entitle one to make simultaneous application to several colleges. The various rationalization and unification efforts naturally often have a feedback effect on goals and criteria; individual institutions dispense with collecting certain data when they use joint application forms. Public institutions in many states are induced by centralized computerized data processing not to consider the assessment of any characteristics other than school grades and test results. Achievement tests in individual states—which can take into consideration the curricula in the region—are supplanted by the service of the two testing institutes, Educational Testing Service (ETS) and American College Testing Program (ACT). Many schools allow predictive validity to impose itself as the decisive principle of the admissions policy due to the fact that both of the two testing institutes offer such surveys at a reasonable price. In the process many procedures are surely dropped which do not serve the colleges' objectives well or at all. In many cases, however, there also results a narrowing of criteria, by which the connection between the goals and the admission system of the individual college or university is made more tenuous.

Diversity in Admissions Criteria and Procedures

The institutions are not seriously limited in the selection of criteria and procedures. The example of data assessment can be cited to show what diversity is possible. According to a survey in the 1960s, of those colleges and universities which took account of the tests in admission and regularly assigned specific weights, 18% gave the tests a weight of up to 20% in the decision on admission as a whole; 15% of the colleges assigned the tests a weight between 21 and 40%; 33% of the institutions assigned them a weight of between 41 and 60% and 4% of the schools assigned the tests more than 60% (Aléamoni 1968, p. 56).

Certainly there do exist restrictions against an arbitrary structuring of admission. First, the influence of the states is great, especially in setting prerequisites for admission. At almost all colleges graduation from high school is a general prerequisite; many colleges and universities require in addition that the applicant has completed the academic track or equivalent courses. Conversely, there exist some state regulations according to which access to the "open admissions" institutions must be granted to persons with particular types of school records. In addition, the states often have a coordinating influence on other decisions, such as on the transfer admission of community college graduates to four-year colleges and universities, and upon certain principles of admission.

Second, admissions criteria and practices are also evaluated by the accreditation associations of the colleges and by professional organizations. It is difficult to estimate to what extent this has a standardizing effect on admission and if, in the process, conflicts tend to develop.

Third, licensing examinations which exist for certain professions such as doctors, nurses and lawyers have a strong effect upon the establishment of admission criteria and procedures. Colleges and universities are forced to weight cognitive criteria and thus to set high admission standards in order to increase the probability that students will successfully complete degree studies and pass the licensing exam.

Fourth, room for maneuver in decision-making may in the future be limited by a pending Supreme Court decision according to which admissions practices may not discriminate for particular groups in society. For a long time this principle was discussed in the sense of support for the socially weaker: whether, for example, the tests might be a disadvantage for women and minorities, and how equality of opportunity among regions might be established. In recent years, however, it was the opposite criticism which lay at the basis of spectacular legal disputes in which it was claimed that a positive discrimination against socially and regionally disadvantaged persons in the admissions process is irreconcilable with the Constitution. ETS now has an information service on legal problems in college admission, and many experts fear that admission to higher education will become more and more subject to legal constraints.

Admissions officers in charge of the undergraduate level displayed little concern to me about this development. The criteria and practices are frequently so varied and are managed so differently that clear proof of discrimination can scarcely be possible. Those responsible for admission in graduate and professional schools seem, on the other hand, to be greatly upset; the greater uniformity and familiarity of admissions criteria make these areas more liable for legal supervision.[4] In addition, several other federal laws exercise an influence on admissions procedures. Since the mid-seventies students have the right, on the basis of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, to examine the files which the colleges and universities keep concerning them. Many schools fear that the loss of anonymity of recommendations has made them less honest, and therefore pay them less regard; others, however, see adequate ways of nonetheless protecting confidentiality.

It should be emphasized that the restrictions mentioned in this section generally leave the colleges and universities great leeway in establishing criteria and practices.

Special Account Given Particular Types of Applicants through Flexible Assessment

Many institutions regard the development of a fixed system for weighting criteria and practices for normal applicants (exceptions will be treated later) as being neither apt nor advantageous. In many cases the assessment varies according to certain general principles; in others the decision is made to a certain extent on a case-to-case basis.

To be sure, in some colleges and universities admissions decisions follow a definite assessment pattern. The University of Massachusetts in Amherst, for examples, attempts to weigh school achievement and test results in such a way that the composite score—Predictive Grade Point Average—will show the highest possible correlation with the performance which past experience suggests can be expected in first year studies. Thus, in 1976, for the applicants to the majority of university divisions, rank in high school class was weighted 63%, the Verbal SAT score 27%, and the Mathematics SAT score 10% (Beals 1976, p. 37).

Many institutions also attempt to provide for as objective an assessment as possible of those characteristics of their applicants for which they have no quantifiable data. In the case of personal characteristics, occupational experiences, hobbies, goals in life, etc., the available information may be evaluated according to definite point-scales, and great pains are often taken to secure a high rating reliability, which is then weighed in relation to other data. But in many schools no such formal equal-treatment of normal applicants according to a set weighing-scale takes place. Sometimes data proving to be disadvantageous to the individual students are stricken from the evaluation, or candidates are rejected who appear unexpectedly weak according to particular criteria.

A case by case treatment of admissions applications generally follows preselection on the basis of standardized scales in which the applicants are divided into sure candidates, doubtful cases, and applicants clearly to be rejected. Admissions committees then pay special attention to the doubtful cases and decide on them individually. At some institutions, even these reviews are procedurally standardized in an effort to minimize subjective factors.

The decentralized, highly varied and consequently only partly standardized admissions procedures are certainly not immune to human error. Admissions officers and other members of admissions committees must combine the abilities of advisors, statisticians, and administrators, and above and beyond this, they must have a thorough understanding of the objectives of education at their own institutions. Even though the postgraduate education of the administrative personnel of American colleges and universities is impressive to foreign observers and even though I encountered very competent admissions officers, it was my impression that they were not always up to the job, and that much appears to be left to chance and subjective preferences. Admissions officers--who in dealing with applicants and their parents endeavor to radiate trust and who in admissions committees are accustomed to holding up their end in discussions with teaching staff—naturally take price in their experience. In many cases they can show in the results of institutional research that their system of evaluating high school records, test scores and noncognitive factors has resulted in a higher predictive validity than any standardized composite score of grades and test results.

"Subjective" practices and selection on a case-by-case basis are readily accepted in the U.S., not only because of the limited expectation of a "just" admission process. As I learned, even the testing experts regard these subjective practices as the most sensible approach, at least for the final selection in doubtful cases. In support of this position, subjective and accidental factors are pointed to which also enter into school grades and test results. Retrospective analyses of the correlation between data available at the time of admission and later study achievements often show that for the broad middle grouping of applicants school grades and test results discriminate very inadequately. Moreover, the particular problems of the applicant or a sharp decline in school achievement due to special circumstances may not be adequately taken into consideration with the use of standardized weighting procedures. Furthermore, through the composition of the admissions committee and the independent evaluation of applications by several people, attempts are made, particularly by the highly selective colleges, both to keep the subjective bias within limits, and to secure the equal participation of people with a broad range of personal experience.

Finally, as one expert emphasized to me, when admissions officers from various institutions have worked together, in selection committees for particular scholarships, for example, there is an astonishing level of agreement in their evaluations (rating reliability).

Positive Discrimination

Up to this point, I have been discussing the latitude which colleges and universities possess in selecting the best applicants according to the goals of the institution. Beyond this, the institutions may decide to accept many applicants who are not considered the most suitable persons according to the prevailing goals and criteria at that particular time and on the basis of normal procedures.

The first group for which exceptions from the normal admission standards are made are the socially disadvantaged. Many institutions of higher education provide a particular quota of study places for an equal opportunity program for which they apply their usual criteria but lower the standards; some institutions, however, prefer modified criteria and procedures. Some colleges, in addition, take social hardship into consideration in admissions and in doubtful cases concede preference to socially disadvantaged persons.

The application of differentiated standards for socially disadvantaged persons does not necessarily imply an intention to accept less suitable students. "The use of differential admissions criteria for educationally disadvantaged students is based on the belief that appropriate services (counseling, tutoring, remedial work) can bring the achievement level of these students to that of their regularly admitted counterparts" (Gordon 1975, p. 9). Even if one considers this expectation to be exaggerated, many colleges follow an elitist policy in the admission of ethnic minorities insofar as they seek out students who "would present the least risk to their standards" (ibid). Normally, however, institutions must reckon with the fact that the majority of the socially disadvantaged students admitted according to differentiated standards will also be behind the other students in studies, and often will only be placed in the position of earning a degree by means of different standards of achievement in their studies.[5] On the whole, special admissions standards for the socially disadvantaged are very controversial, as will be illustrated in Chapter IX.

For female applicants, colleges frequently add 30 points to the score of the Mathematics SAT in order to provide a balance against culturally conditioned disadvantages in the development of their mathematical capabilities (cf. Schrader and Stewart 1971, Fremer and Chandler 1971). Beyond this, however, few attempts have been made to compensate for the recent decline in the proportion of women studying and their differing representation in the various types of institutions and disciplines. On the contrary, many persons with whom I spoke criticized the fact that counseling for applicants, especially for professional areas, still takes place in accordance with traditional sex-role stereotypes.

A special handling of applicants from particular regions takes place partly for the purpose of balancing out social disadvantages. While normally the decision of a state government to admit only a few applicants from other states to its public institutions is generally accepted, special quotas for applicants from certain regions within a state are considered legally impermissible. Thus, it appears that state colleges have little room for maneuver in taking steps towards compensating for regional disparities. Regional equality of opportunity therefore depends mainly on the regional distribution of colleges and universities. Private institutions have more freedom of action here; ranking institutions often exert themselves on behalf of disadvantaged regions in order to make the university more widely known and to ensure that their alumni are widely distributed in the various regional elites.

Institutions also regularly admit applicants who are expected to contribute to the enrichment of college life, in particular to athletic activities and the stimulation of general recreational and social activities. They generally do this knowing that such persons, by the end of their studies, will not necessarily have acquired the academic abilities the college otherwise strives to instill.

Special preference for the socially privileged is very strong, especially at the more distinguished institutions. Children of alumni as well as applicants from rich and socially influential families are given clear preference in admission. At Harvard University, for example, applicants whose fathers attended Harvard have a better than five times as favorable a chance of being accepted as normal applicants, a difference which has no "rational" explanation in terms of ordinary admissions criteria.

Probably in no other highly industrialized country are the privileged so blatantly favored in admission to higher education as in the U.S. It is natural that private universities can hardly consider themselves the vanguard of equality in opportunity without endangering themselves financially in the process; but the private universities in Japan, for example, were very concerned to control admission by applying particularistic standards even during a time when they were receiving minimal state support. Certainly many plausible arguments for the difference between the U.S. and Japan can be cited by drawing from the history of higher education and from the financial situation; but on the whole this favoring of the privileged at prominent universities is amazing when one considers that continuing social inequality in the U.S. is, in comparison with most European countries, more characterized by meritocratical legitimization and is less affected by social legislation.[6] Thus, one would assume that the traditional elite could acquire the halo of privilege won by achievement in education only if direct favoritism—that is, favor shown in addition to the advantage which as a rule the privileged already possess even when equal standards of measurement are applied—were to remain slight.

The question thus remains: is the basic meritocratic principle in American society more strongly social-Darwinian than is here assumed? This would mean that it is not the most able who are rewarded, but that rather the person who is able to succeed by whatever means available is the one who deserves privileges. Are efforts toward integration and positive discrimination for the disadvantaged more easily accepted when the privileged also receive positive discrimination in selection processes? Or is it the case that even in the face of meritocratic pressure for legitimation, the position is maintained that admission is largely a private matter of the educational institutions? Perhaps it is the favoritism towards the privileged displayed by many schools in the U.S. which shows most clearly how much leeway in decision-making the schools possess and how unnecessary it is in the U.S. to have a "good" or "perfect" admissions system.

Furthermore, applicants are also given preferential treatment at some private colleges and universities if they appear to have sufficient funds to finance their college education. This issue concerns a completely different problem than preference for children of alumni, influential individuals, etc. Whereas the latter is more or less accepted as general practice, a good admissions officer will strictly dispute the assertion that the college or university gives consideration to an applicant's financial ability. Statements on personal income are alleged to be used by financial aid offices only after a decision on admission has been made. This is emphasized because the system of public aid to private schools is based on the principle that a genuine possibility of studying is to be provided to students able and willing to embark on a course of studies. Thus, there exists a widespread public scholarship system— so complex that it is scarcely comprehensible to the applicant—which is mainly oriented towards financial need.[7] Nonetheless, applicants from families with small and average incomes have much greater difficulties financing study at a private college or university than at a public one (cf. Fife 1975); the private institutions with especially high fees must therefore pay a great deal of attention to the financial position of their applicants.

Finally, colleges and universities—apart from the exceptions already defined—may also deliberately admit students who fail to meet the institution's declared standards. Harvard University, the most prestigious university judging from the great number of applicants with high test ratings and from the low proportion of applicants who do not enroll after being admitted, gives preference to a "happy bottom quarter" of academically less brilliant students over many applicants who are better according to Harvard's own standards. The intention is to spare a student who was top of his class in high school the emotional problems of finding himself suddenly one of the poorer students in so selective an institution. A school can afford itself such a strategy directed towards the "internal life" of the university when the society considers it acceptable for an elite university to reject fully capable students and accept less able ones.

Special admissions regulations for hardship cases are common practice in most countries. The extent to which less able students are admitted for other reasons, however, is worthy of remark. Such practices, to be sure, are controversial within the colleges themselves. Representatives of the teaching staff in the selection committees more frequently tend to emphasize the suitability of students according to the general educational goals of the college or university. The admissions officers, on the other hand, are more prepared to consider other interests of the institution. Who finally has the last word is often a question of the proportion of administrative personnel to teaching staff in the selection committee. Corresponding with this picture is the fact that at graduate schools where strict academic admissions standards are regarded throughout as being appropriate, normally only university teachers decide on admission.

In conclusion, one can state that colleges and universities in the U.S. have remarkable leeway in fashioning admission as they see fit. The variety of admissions practices confirms the assumption that the expectation of as "just" a selection as possible in meritocratic terms can be only one of many factors that shape the admissions system.

This does not mean, however, that the admissions system in the U.S. appears to the foreign observer as an unstructured plethora of practices, or that the admissions policies of the individual schools would appear to be so arbitrary that generalizations about them are not possible. If one proceeds from what many admissions officers have to say about the diversified system and the latitude the colleges enjoy in determining admissions policy, it is remarkable how consistent admissions practices actually are. Contributing to this relative consistency are factors such as the professional cooperation of admissions officers, the testing institutes, the pressure for rationalization, the advertising effectiveness of particular measures, and efforts towards coordination in the education system.

1. See the Medical College Application Service 1976, Association of American Medical Colleges 1976, and Cunnane 1976.
2. In the case of the 10 state colleges in Massachusetts, the over 70 institutions comprising the State University of New York or the over 20 colleges of the City University of New York, uniform application forms are sent to a central bureau, registered, and then evaluated according to the wishes of the individual institution.
3. Not only are those schools which must recruit a sufficient number of students interested in advertising directed at students, but also the semi- and highly-selective institutions, which strive for a high quality of applicants and a low number of rejections by applicants they have accepted.
4. To these points must be added the fact that the competition rates are often high, that the students more often regard the decision as being important, and that these students are more often acquainted with the legal situation.
5. According to Gordon 1975, the relatively high success quotas of socially disadvantaged persons can chiefly be attributed to such double standards; they are, however, also achieved in part by special measures taken to compensate for the students' conditions.
6. This does not mean that on the whole the inequality of opportunity in access to famous universities must be unusually high on an international comparison, for other factors like opportunities in secondary school and quotas for the socially disadvantaged also play a role there.
7. Many colleges even seek out poor applicants, as, given the present system of public financial aid, such students create less of an expense for the individual institution than do some middle class students who do not qualify for public aid.

V

LIMITATIONS OF TESTING

In view of the relatively great freedom of colleges and universities in the U.S. to determine their own principles, criteria, and practices for admission, it appears that these institutions are in a position to choose which of the various criteria and practices they prefer to employ. One can even imagine that under certain circumstances all institutions could dispense with admissions tests if they so chose.

Turning first to the quantitative circulation of the tests. it is clear that most students take one of the major tests (SAT, ACT) before their admission. Despite their widespread use, however, the value of the tests is limited in the higher education system.

Selectivity of the Institution and the Role of Testing

The main objectives of the tests—that the test represents a "common yardstick" for all, is considered especially fair, and contributes to a better prediction of success in studies—are important chiefly for highly selective schools bethey have applicants from many schools and, where a high competition rate is involved, generally higher demands are set. All told, however, only about 10% of schools are classified as highly selective, 40% as semi-selective, while 50% practice more or less open admissions (cf. Astin 1976).

Test results also have a function for selection decisions in "open-admission" colleges and universities. Many of these schools have individual departments with selective admission. Test results are also considered when advising students on what courses might be too demanding for them and whether they should take remedial courses. It is frequently doubted, however, that the normal SAT and ACT tests are suitable for the above purposes. It is alleged that the easy availability and wide dissemination of the tests, as well as the students' assumption of the costs, too easily tempt the colleges into using the test results for such purposes.

Besides this, there are many colleges and universities which in practice hardly ever reject students and yet still set certain minimum requirements above and beyond a high school diploma. In recent years efforts have increased in many states to demand specific minimum test scores for enrollment in the regular program at public "open-admission" colleges and universities. Many institutions, particularly private ones, give requisite test scores in their information brochures or deliberately attempt with the help of the "Student Search Service" to solicit students who belong to a particular segment of test scores.

At most semiselective colleges and universities, the tests are considered in admission, but the fact that some institutions of this type get by without considering test scores suggests that in this area the tests are not indispensable. Many of the smaller private schools abolish the consideration of tests with a great fanfare of publicity in order to celebrate their institution as an interesting pedagogical alternative. But the example of a great state university—which rates applicants according to the two best results in the three categories: school grades, rank in class, and test scores—must also be mentioned. It shows that such institutions do not uniformly consider a "common yardstick" to be necessary.

It is possible to argue about the level in the institutional hierarchy at which the tests gain a function in selection that would be difficult to replace. In any case, the demand for test results on the part of the colleges and universities is much more widespread than normally appears necessary even to those who are advocates of tests.

Test Scores—a Subordinate Part of Data Available about the Applicant

Test scores represent only a subordinate part of the information which the colleges and universities have at their disposal, and are generally not allotted the highest significance in admissions decisions. It is normally assumed that school achievement (the grade point average and/or rank in class) are accorded the greatest weight in admission. In schools which do not undertake any specific weighing process, the priority of tests might tend to be even slighter. This supposition was expressed in conversations on how the relative weight of the tests has declined during the 1970s. If one follows the statements of some admissions directors, the tests seem to play only a slight role in the framework of very differentiated procedures—having a control function on the other judgments, but on the whole seeming almost superfluous.

Against this widespread downplaying of the importance of tests, a word of caution is appropriate. Institutions have become more deliberate in their use of tests, for two reasons. The abundant criticism of tests in recent years has had effects. Also, many colleges have been obliged to lower their admission standards in order to recruit enough applicants, or have been forced *de facto* to switch over to open admission from a moderately selective position (cf. Schulman 1976; Carnegie Council 1975). Thus, the tests have declined in importance for these colleges as well. On the other hand, many colleges and universities are increasingly seeing difficulties in relying on the records supplied by their applicants' secondary schools. Contributing to this development has been the criticism of the schools and of their grading—the inflation of grades and the often simplified "pass-fail" grading—as well as the loss of confidentiality of personal recommendations. For another thing, admissions personnel often underestimate the actual weight of the tests.

Important, although invisible in its effect, is the influence of test results upon the decision to apply to a particular college in the first place; the colleges heighten this influence by the measures they themselves take, as already mentioned. Also, high school achievements and test scores are often not treated fully independently. Test scores have quite an influence on the evaluation of the quality of the school and thus in a certain sense, while serving as a corrective evaluation, they enter into the assessment of grade-point average or rank in class. Finally, the admissions officers tend to underestimate the value they themselves attach to test scores. One reason is that they devote more time to other evaluations where they can bring their own experiences into play. Moreover, the test score seldom represents a "cut-off-point" in the final selection decision where other aspects prove decisive.

Tests as "Common Yardstick"—a Dispensable Function?

Not all the selective schools value the service tests provide in finding a common yardstick for the abilities of the applicants. Many admissions officers emphasize that they have such a good overall view of the quality of the high schools that they could easily balance out the different standards of measurement by devising a statistical corrective. At times the different standards are deliberately not corrected in order that admissions decisions work in a compensatory way: the net effect of treating grades equally in the U.S. results in conceding advantages to the socially disadvantaged in the admissions process. One is surprised at how often in the discussion on education policy in the U.S. statistics on the correlation between school grades, income, and attendance of higher education are cited uncritically as indications of equality of opportunity (cf., for example, Rice 1977, p. 25).

Two qualifications should be made, however, to the argument in favor of employing only estimated statistical correctives. Admissions officers have a variety of means of evaluating the quality of schools, for example, by visiting schools to recruit students, observation of their success in studies, talks with alumni, etc. Their most important means however, are standardized tests, be these national or state achievement tests for high school students or the SAT and ACT texts. It is also often assumed that prominent colleges and universities automatically place a low assessment on the level of unknown high schools, and that therefore the more gifted students from these schools would scarcely have a prospect of being admitted. It was against this sort of prejudicial treatment that testing in the U.S. rose historically as an instrument of equality of opportunity—as the "great equalizer." In this context it is understandable that in the U.S. people tend to accept weaknesses in the admissions testing more readily than one does in West Germany, where the proposed tests are rather intended as legitimization for controversial restrictions on admission.

Testing and the Expectation of a Fair Admissions Procedure

Another possible service of the tests is making the admissions procedure appear fair. Tests appear to be especially suited for this due to their formally equal treatment of applicants. It is doubtful, however, whether such fairness through equal treatment is seen as very important in the U.S. Talking with admissions officers gave me the impression that for the colleges as well as for the applicants, fairness is not the most highly ranked expectation. Its place is reduced by the widely accepted practice of special preference for particular categories and by the view that students and colleges should be "matched" to one another.

The question arises as to whether evaluation according to formally equal criteria is the fairest solution or instead the evaluation which is highly differentiated and seeks to do justice to the individual case on the basis of as much information as possible. Thus, the University of Chicago—among the private universities the one that values highest the academic abilities of its freshmen—prides itself upon using "the most personalized methods" in admission. The debate concerning the various prerequisites of the "new students"—the socially disadvantaged high school graduates and also the older students—has intensified doubts on whether uniform criteria for all students (who themselves have different starting points in their development) is in fact the fairest kind of yardstick with respect both to acquired abilities and to expected development in the course of studies. These doubts not only affect conceptions of the responsibilities of the "open-admissions" schools, but also place in question the traditional admissions policies of highly selective colleges and universities.

Assessing Predictive Validity

The fact that tests might contribute towards a better prediction of success in studies is in many cases not considered an important argument for taking the tests into consideration. In their admission process many colleges and universities pursue other goals than that of predicting success in studies as closely as possible. Many wish to be assured that the students fulfill particular minimum cognitive standards or master particular material. Consideration of achievement tests probably rests more upon the wish to make sure the material is mastered than it does upon any hopes of increasing the predictive validity of admission (cf. on this matter Coffman 1971).

At other colleges the opinion prevails that the applicants in the final-choice category are capable of fulfilling achievement demands. Thus, one must be more concerned with sorting out those students who would not fit with the style of the school or who, because of personality problems, would probably not complete their studies. One person interviewed even maintained that the majority of institutions only wish to be certain that they more or less get the same type of students every year; any further sophistication in the procedure would be considered unnecessary. Only colleges which wish to rise in the hierarchy of prestige, he noted, would place any real value on predictive validity.

Criticism of predictive validity proceeds from two opposing positions. On the one side, motivated by the desire to make possible a prediction that would be almost perfect, the criticism is voiced that tests do not contribute enough to improving the prognosis. When the correlation between success in school, the "single best predictor," and study achievement amounts to 0.50, and when through a combined score of school grades and test scores the predictive power is increased to around 0.56,[1] then the desired predictive validity is still too far off. This "perfectionistic" approach (in Germany used often in the argument against selection according to school grades and in favor of the introduction of tests) claims that such an important decision as the denial of a desired study goal should not be made on such loose ground. However, as one educational sociologist maintained, such a demand is completely irreconcilable with the actual "looseness" of an open society and good personality development.

On the other side, the goal of a high predictive validity is criticized as being antagonistic to the educational process. An educational institution which wants to educate should consider it desirable "to make a difference in the student's life" (Astin 1976, p. 17). It should not punish late developers by the selection process and only choose foreseeable winners, but should rather see its goal precisely in promoting unexpected development;[2] in such a case, though, predictive validity would be lessened. Astin (1976;

p. 18) makes this clear by arguing that predictive validity would be especially high if all students were to learn absolutely nothing at college. In this discussion, the testing institutes find themselves in an evident dilemma. In the fact of efforts made over decades to increase predictive validity, they can at best strike up a tune about the "looseness" of open society. They also know that the best *de facto* contribution of tests to college admission lies in providing a "common yardstick" (this is shown, for example, in Turnbull 1977).

At the same time (this applies more for ETS than ACT) they advertise heavily the increased predictive validity to be had from including test results. With the very successful sale of validity studies to the individual colleges and universities, for whom they represent relatively cheap and interesting "institutional research," the testing institutes achieve the educational effect of keeping alive interest in increasing predictive validity as well as in differentiated quantitative admissions procedures and thus interest in the tests as well. The testing institutes are sticking to this course, although the "perfectionistic" approach can turn into a boomerang for them. Their own theoretical point, as well as the hope that the emphasis on predictive validity will nourish interest in sophisticated procedures, may well contribute to this position.

It cannot be clearly determined whether the fact that a relatively slight correlation is assumed between "academic" criteria in college admission and later occupational success (see Chapter VII) weakens the position of tests in the admissions process. Some experts conclude that cognitive tests should not be valued as highly as they have been. For most, however, such findings confirm their proclivity only to consider estimated future success in studies and not occupational success when making a decision on admission.

Noncognitive Admissions Criteria and Testing

The importance of tests and other "academic" criteria in college admission is lessened more in the U.S. than in many other countries by the fact that many schools attempt to take the applicant's social skills, character traits, motivation, and many other noncognitive (or "nonacademic") characteristics into consideration. For this purpose the colleges and universities may solicit information by means of questionnaires, essays and short written statements from the applicants, personal recommendations, in many cases interviews, and finally, in rare cases, through noncognitive tests.

For a number of decades the importance of nonacademic criteria for admission had been declining. Contributing to this were the rising demands on qualification, a stronger universalistic and meritocratic orientation of colleges and universities, the widening prestige hierarchy of colleges, the existence of the cognitive tests which developed out of these conditions, and the pressure towards rationalization of the procedures existing, especially at large institutions. Since approximately the end of the 1960s, however, a development in the opposite direction is evident. The consideration of noncognitive characteristics in the admission process has received impetus from various sources.

The more vigorous propagation of a "diversified system of higher education" since the beginning of the 1970s (cf. Lenning 1974) is having effect for a variety of reasons. The private colleges, which under this banner have sought to hold their own against the state institutions, can frequently display their "uniqueness" more advantageously in the area of their noncognitive educational goals. The higher education lobby has generally attempted to defend public funding for higher education against the charge of growing overqualification by referring to accomplishments which do not directly serve preparation for an occupation. The ideological effect of the propagation of the diversified system (which veils the importance of access to particular colleges and universities for one's later chances in life) is especially strong if selection is not based too much on relatively uniform cognitive criteria. Genuine efforts on the part of the universities towards diversification by responding to disparate students' interests and accepting that education may have diverse goals, indicate that the institutions are prepared to give more weight to noncognitive characteristics.

Concern has grown in recent years that, due to one-sided cognitive selection and training in higher education, the aspirants to elite positions who have been selected and prepared in such a manner are not the most suitable. It is being increasingly emphasized that highly qualified specialists such as doctors and lawyers must be well-rounded personalities (cf. Keochakian), and that it is precisely in the highest positions in institutional hierarchies that social skills are particularly important. For our purposes it can remain an open question whether this discussion is increasing because, as a result of the education expansion of recent decades, applicants for highly selective fields are considered as a matter of course to be qualified cognitively, and thus attention is now being paid to noncognitive qualities as supplementary to these; or whether personality damage has been increasing as a consequence of sharpened competition over access to some professional schools. In any event, attempts have increased in recent years to develop tests for determining "good" doctors, lawyers, etc. The motive for this seems, however, to lie less in legitimizing the selection as being "just" (this is the situation in the corresponding discussion in Germany, where "just" is used with regard to probable ability maximally to fulfill one's professional responsibilities), than in preventing a poorer performance of professional roles due to a one-sided selection and socialization of professional recruits.

The admission of so-called "nontraditional students" or "new students," socially disadvantaged, older students or low achievers, already increasing greatly during the 1960s, has also heightened interest in noncognitive admissions criteria. First, the notion is widespread that test scores are not the best way to determine which "new" students will most likely succeed in the atmosphere of selective colleges and universities molded by the traditional type of student, despite their less favorable prerequisites in terms of tested "developed abilities." Instead, high motivation, emotional stability, and other similar characteristics are regarded as being very important. Second, attempts to make possible the access of adults to higher education (or to shorten their study period) by giving credit for life experience have a double effect on the stronger value laid on noncognitive characteristics. Such noncognitive criteria as readiness to become involved in work often enter consciously into the evaluation of past experiences in life. This evaluation of life-experiences also challenges the institutions to see college education not so much as a goal in itself, but more as a contribution towards future mastery in life, whereby, once again, more value is placed upon the noncognitive "outcomes" of higher education.

The consideration of noncognitive criteria in admission is also emphasized because of its advertising effects. As noted earlier, elaborate procedures have their own advertising effects; a student can also hope for admission in a greater range of colleges if school achievements and test grades are not alone decisive.

Approaches to the consideration of noncognitive characteristics in admission tend to be quite divergent. This applies not only to the selection of noncognitive dimensions, the goals of the individual college or university, and the value judgments which enter into the picture of a "good" graduate or a "good" professional activity. This also holds true for the interesting question of the appropriate balance between noncognitive and cognitive criteria in the admissions process.

Two conceptions compete with one another: the "heterogeneity-model" and the "integration-model." The first proceeds from the position that society requires both cognitively and noncognitively excellent persons and that both types should be promoted by higher education. Empirical findings are cited according to which cognitive and noncognitive characteristics do not as a rule positively correlate with one another, while noncognitive "accomplishments" during and after studies can be prognosticated by measuring corresponding characteristics before studies begin.[3] The integration model values the combination of cognitive and noncognitive characteristics for a "good" doctor or lawyer and stresses the development of a "well-rounded personality."[4] The first model would make it seem advisable to weight cognitive and noncognitive criteria differently in the admissions process, depending on the objectives; the second model would require the weighting to be uniform.

The ideal connection between the educational goals of the institution and their admissions criteria is also differently conceived. Thus, it is asserted that the weighting of criteria should correspond to the relative weight of the goals. In contrast to this it is often maintained that in the admissions process only "academic" criteria should be considered, as success in studies is built upon corresponding prerequisites. Finally, the notion exists that it is necessary to consider noncognitive admissions criteria in order to establish an applicant's potential for cognitive development.[5]

If, however, criteria and practices are examined in detail, doubts about the importance of noncognitive standards of measurement in the admissions process seem justified. If assertions regarding the broad goals of higher education were honored, it would be difficult to understand how school grades and test results have so great a weight. To be sure, the colleges and universities are very aware that the choice of admissions criteria and procedures must reflect the goals of the institutions. However, even though many examples were told to me of how the particular characteristics of an institution affect the admission process, attempts seldom seem made to develop a precise, adequate set of admissions guidelines out of the goals set by an institution (cf. Menacker 1975, p. 43; Burn 1977b, p. 9).

It also appears doubtful whether the colleges actually exert themselves over a systematic evaluation of noncognitive factors as much as they claim. One critic considered the usual assertions to be completely exaggerated. In his view institutions seek to increase the numbers of applicants by allowing those applicants with school grades and test scores below the usual standard to gain the impression that they nevertheless have a good chance of being admitted. Also, an actual lowering of admissions standards could be sold quite well using such arguments. Finally, in his estimation, one could refer to the good-sounding generalized principle of taking noncognitive characteristics into consideration in order to accept, on an individual basis, the children of former students and applicants who might contribute financially to the institution.

The systematic consideration of noncognitive characteristics may also be limited by the absence of rationalized and sophisticated procedures which correspond and are analogous to the SAT and ACT tests in the cognitive area. The two major testing organizations have concerned themselves intensively with this issue, and have themselves developed corresponding tests and have supplemented the cognitive tests with questionnaires, with the help of which the students undertake self-rating of noncognitive characteristics. Among the staffs of these organizations are proponents as well as opponents of noncognitive tests. In its publications ETS refers more to the validity problems of noncognitive tests (for example, Fremer and Chandler 1971), while ACT emphasizes more heavily the importance of noncognitive characteristics (for example, Munday and Davis 1974). But both hesitate to introduce noncognitive tests.

This hesitation is understandable in light of the technical and normative problems involved. For example, higher correlations were almost entirely limited to cases where the stability of particular noncognitive characteristics was measured during the course of precollege schooling, college education, and then in working life. The investigation of a great number of characteristics is only realizable with the help of self-ratings in which case deliberately incorrect assertions play a role, or with the aid of ratings made by college or university personnel, and these generally are not sufficiently reliable. The normative elements in the evaluation of noncognitive characteristics if incorporated in the selection process produce conformity in college students and the profession, or at least these normative elements necessitate different evaluations according to the goals of the individual colleges and universities.

In conclusion, objective testing appears not to be indispensable to criteria and practices of admission to higher education. Many schools could, for all practical purposes, make their admissions decisions without test results being available. Representatives of the schools emphasize the importance of other information for admission. The particular achievements of the tests–providing a common standard of measurement, letting the procedure appear fair, and predicting academic success–are not universally considered very important, and are widely regarded as attainable by other means. Moreover, emphasis is placed on characteristics of the applicants which the tests do not cover.

At the same time, however, in practice the tests play a much greater role than is conceded in theoretical deliberations on their necessity and the relation between an institution's goals and its admissions policy. This lends urgency to the question discussed in Chapter VI: whether the great weight given tests under the current conditions of university admission is to be regarded as inappropriate, or whether the functions which testing fulfills over and beyond those mentioned above are underestimated.

My conversations in the U.S. showed that doubts as to the necessity of tests and criticism of their place in evaluation are by no means the monopoly of test critics in that country or of foreign observers. This criticism has even caused the necessity of tests to be questioned in the testing institutes themselves.

The reactions of the testing institutes to this development appear to be very different. ETS tends to admit rather realistically the several weaknesses and limitations of tests, while at the same time pleading for a greater appreciation of testing and its principles and useful applications. ETS can take this position, assured of its tradition and its clientele in the more distinguished universities. Contributing to this is the strong psychological approach in ETS which is interested in setting certain essentials of testing upheld to the greatest extent possible under prevailing conditions of the admissions system. ACT, on the other hand, considers it possible that the tests, in and of themselves, could come to be regarded in the future as being more or less dispensable. Their clientele–in many cases large, semi-selective state universities in the western part of the country–offer less guarantee for a continuation of testing traditions. There also exists a stronger sociological outlook at ACT, according to which tests are judged more by their contribution to the entire set of goals and societal functions of the admissions system. Thus, ACT regards the contribution of the tests as secure in the long run only if they can be enclosed in the kind of "packet" ACT is already offering, containing all the differentiated data the institutions of higher education wish to bring to bear on admissions.

1. As median, according to different investigations, ACT (American College Testing Program 1973c, p. 19) gives .512 and .576, respectively, and ETS (Schrader 1971, p. 127) gives .55 and .62 respectively. The estimates are probably based on studies in which the correlations are unusually high (cf. Keochakian).
2. According to the accounts of an adviser at a prominent university, the experience has been that the relatively weaker beginning students often make very great learning progress, as they know that they must exert themselves especially hard in order to keep up with the others.
3. Cf., for example, Holland and Richards 1965; Baird and Richards 1968; Munday and Davis 1974.
4. Cf. the survey on the state of research in Keochakian 1975.
5. See on this point the survey of available research in Lenning *et al.*, 1974a, b.

VI

LATENT FUNCTIONS OF TESTING

The preceding analysis has shown that the importance of tests in college admission in the U.S. can be explained only to a limited degree by their technical capacity to function as a "common yardstick" and to legitimate admissions decisions as "just." It is also clear, however, that tests play a more important role in college admissions than can be explained on the basis of these two considerations. The question thus arises as to whether objective testing has other important functions in admissions which have not yet been considered.[1]

Historical Continuity in the Face of a Partial Loss of Function

One can well imagine that the tests developed under particular historical conditions at first played a more or less indispensable role, but then maintained their position while these conditions changed, and that a new set of conditions would call for completely different criteria and procedures. The tests arose at a time when it was considered very important to select the most able and talented students in order to advance science, technology, and civilization. An equal standard of measurement for all applicants and the prediction of academic success are more important under such conditions than they are in a time when people tend to be afraid of "overqualification."

The function of uniform standards of measurement designed to act as the "great equalizer" may have been significant when it seemed necessary to promote such progress by applying universalistic principles and a meritocratic reward system. Today there is less need to fear that less objective procedures would lead to a return to preindustrial particularistic selection. It is possible now to give more thought to the pseudo-fairness of "equal standards" measured against unequal developmental conditions as well as to the possible compensatory effects of education at elite colleges and universities.

The tests arose at a time when a strong emphasis on the socially integrating functions of education made it urgent to standardize criteria. Admissions practices would have to assume another character should the socially integrative function be diminished by an acceptance of diversity of motives and goals.

One can pinpoint at least a partial loss of function for objective testing. It is not possible here to make a completely satisfactory analysis of this or an adequate estimate of whether, despite the changes, the tests still remain necessary.[2] The criticism is valid, however, that the possibility of such a loss of function is seldom considered when at selective institutions decisions[3] are made on admissions policy and the place that tests should occupy within it.

Tendency towards Self-perpetuation in Objective Testing

Doubts as to the necessity of the present form of the admissions system also appear to be justified because objective testing, once developed, appears to be self-perpetuating. A college or university's admissions policy depends less on the desire to bring criteria and procedures into accord with the goals of the institution than it does upon the availability of instruments and information. The testing agencies strengthen this inner dynamic in many ways, and most of the research on college admission is in their hands. Although no one doubts the scientific integrity of these studies, it should not be surprising that, although this research through the selection of the questions at issue and through the politics of publication presents a relatively good picture of the many strengths and weaknesses of the tests, it is hardly suitable for examining the rationales of alternate conceptions of admissions.

Tests but One of a Number of Sources of Information about an Applicant

Criticism in the U.S. of the excessive weight assigned to tests probably does not have a negative effect on the widespread use of tests. The majority of critics—including many especially conscientious admissions officers—take a wide array of information into consideration and accept tests as only one source of information. Also, as suggested, traditionalism, inner dynamics, and perfectionist concepts of admission insure that considerable weight continues to be assigned to tests. In addition, however, there appear to be still other factors which strengthen the position of objective tests in admissions. The following assumptions appear to me to have a certain plausibility.

Multiplicity of Criteria as Legitimization for Selection

Tests represent an indispensable element of an admissions system which has a legitimizing effect precisely as a result of the heterogeneous nature of the system. In response to the criticism that the emphasis on cognitive factors is too one-sided, it can point out that a number of noncognitive elements are taken into consideration. The accusation that treatment is unequal is relativized by the tests; social disadvantage should be equaled out by differential standards, etc. No attempt is made to reconcile all these diverse demands and expectations in one well-tuned system, but rather they are partially taken into account and simultaneously rejected in terms of their absolute claims. Admission at a particular college or the admissions system as a whole is not expected to be consonant with particular self-contained principles, but consideration is given to each relevant demand. The particular strengths of the tests are pointed to as proof that nothing important has been left unconsidered.

Whether such a legitimation of admissions criteria and procedures is convincing in the face of the expectations of the public and in particular the applicants, is a question I cannot answer. However, it appears to agree with the approach taken by many college administrators and personnel in public agencies concerned with higher education; they tend to deal with objections by means of supplementary measures. Not relished are questions which ask how the weight of the supplementary criteria and procedures was determined in relation to the preexisting ones, and to what extent such supplementary measures are reconcilable with previously made decisions.

Testing: Step One in a Two-step Process of Selection

The two-step process of selection is one of the most important phenomena which eases the pressure placed on institutional decisions on access to higher education in the U.S. The first step consists of determining the test scores, which officially is not binding upon the decision but in practice is very important. Upon it follows the decision on admission; related to the first step it is not clearly dependent upon it, something the student cannot always clearly perceive.

The prospective applicant with rather modest test scores—whether in school examinations, or one of the aptitude tests (the PSAT, SAT, ACT)—knows that admission to many semi- and highly-selective institutions is improbable. To be sure, the testing institute does not thereby make access absolutely impossible. It can point to the fact that there are very few schools which have a clear "cut-off point." The applicant therefore does not know exactly what chances are open to him or her, for the most outstanding universities take other criteria than tests only into consideration during their decision, without, however, giving the applicant a clear picture of their admissions system. Persons whom the applicant now asks for advice or possibly a letter of recommendation, typically advise him to choose realistically. The best tip is to pick one college or university which corresponds to one's level, one which lies a bit above it, and one which is perhaps a bit beneath it. As a rule, the applicant will make applications according to this pattern, and the final decision of the institutions will not be especially surprising.[4] The mixture of clarity and vagueness in the criteria has performed its task. The mechanism well known in sociology, that an open system lets nonsuccess appear as individual failure, can be seen operating here in perfect form. The individual performs an act of self-renunciation, and the agencies involved can happily claim that selection to higher education takes place primarily by means of "self-selection" and not so much through decisions of the institution.

The Character of the Test and Student Aspirations

The character of the tests and their weight in college admissions appear to be an integral part of a societal constellation one can characterize as "moderate meritocracy" (Bell 1973). Testing appears neither clearly to strengthen nor dampen the aspirations of prospective applicants. The tests are an "equalizer" inasmuch as they nourish the hope that those who exert themselves can count upon success. In contrast to Japan, however, where the entire system of higher education is directed towards stimulating this hope, two important differences can be identified. First, while in Japan the results of the entrance examinations are decisive for the majority of applicants, in the U.S. the multitude of criteria and their lesser degree of comprehensibility limit such expectations. Second, the most important tests in the framework of admission in the U.S. are directed towards "developed ability," in contrast to Japan where the entrance examinations directly and fully reward intense preparation. In the U.S. learning neither is unimportant for success, nor does it appear that the result can be influenced directly by cramming.

The Role of Testing in a Hierarchical System of Higher Education

Together with school grades test results probably have a disproportionate influence on admissions decisions when measured against the goals set by the college or university because most institutions seek to insure that they do not have an intellectually too heterogeneous student body. One can argue that the American system of higher education is basically hierarchically structured, that colleges' other characteristics have only a supplementary quality, and that the colleges and universities chiefly attempt in the admissions process to perpetuate this structure through the heavy weight given to school achievement and test results. Or one can assume (and these arguments complement one another) that with respect to cognitive characteristics most institutions desire that those applicants presumed to be the best are selected, but not with respect to their special goals in socialization. Whereas a college or university may seek to guarantee success in studies by setting a certain cognitive level as prerequisite, it may also be interested in developing leadership qualities in all students, not only in those who show promise in this direction.

Even if it were not necessary to rely on tests as a means of limiting intellectual heterogeneity at the individual institutions, the very existence of the tests would strengthen the position of those who think it important for the system of higher education to be hierarchical. Judging from experience in Germany that the nonexistence of such tests has meant that the differences among *Abitur* recipients tend to be underestimated, one can imagine that the tests and their results offer important symbolic support for those who see in a strongly hierarchical structure of higher education the best conditions for advancing every student according to his or her abilities.

It remains an open question to what extent these theses have bearing and whether or not beneath the surface there lurks some "hidden agenda" or some yet undiscovered and unwanted effect of present admissions practices. Since, however, the decentralization of college admission appears to promote a greater interest in the effects of objective testing for the individual school than for the entire system, interpretations of this type appear to me to be important (cf. also the critique made by Astin 1976, p. 27). Perhaps the price to be paid for the advantages of a decentralized system need not be such that every problem resulting from the sum of individual decisions must be considered an unavoidable concomitant. As tests certainly coordinate college admission more than the institutions of higher education generally realize, discussion on what function the entire admissions system should have for the institutions, for the students, and for the institution's societal goals, cannot merely be dismissed by reference to the merits of a diversified and decentralized system or to the advantages of autonomy for higher education.

1. It is not my intention to join the chorus of those who, proceeding from harmonistic, functionalistic premises, are disposed to give a blanket justification for the prevailing system simply because in their view it meets society's manifold needs. This view can easily lead one to overlook important facts.
2. The concept is widespread that despite expansion in education, scarcity of talents for elite functions has changed just as little as the necessity for filling these positions predominantly with the best cognitive talents. The presumption of a scarcity of talents,

however, in my estimation by no means justifies the existing admissions system.

3. In order to prevent a misunderstanding, I should emphasize that these observations are not directed at changes which result from a growing "open admissions" sector in higher education, but rather at a loss in function of the tests in its selective area.
4. This mutual easing of burdens can be demonstrated most clearly in the case where the applicant decides to which school he will apply after having received the SAT or ACT results. This would, however, also apply in principle for the case where earlier test results (in 1976, 73 percent of beginning students had previously taken the PSAT–Astin, King and Richardson, 1976, p.50) or the anticipation of the expected test results have an influence on the choice of the college or university. In a certain sense this would also apply for the subsequent "rationalization" which the applicant not admitted then finds.

VII

ADDITIONAL DEBATE ON OBJECTIVE TESTING

The preceding chapters presented a variety of criticism of objective testing in the context of the goals and functions of the American college admissions system. In this chapter I deal with additional critical positions which seem important in the light of my experience in the U.S. and interesting for the comparative view.

In a paper for the German-U.S. Study Group on Access to Higher Education, J.K. Britell and W.B. Schrader undertook an interesting review of criticism of admissions testing. The authors appear to view two criticisms as being to some extent valid:

> Admissions tests create pressure for students and stand as barriers to their educational progress.
>
> Admissions tests are imperfect predictors (of college success and life success).

They regard the following criticisms as being largely *not* valid:

> Aptitude tests reward mediocrity and conformity, not depth, and measure rote recall.
>
> Admissions tests are culturally biased (unfair to minorities and disadvantaged).

Finally, they are undecided or ambivalent about two further criticisms:

> Admissions tests serve universities more than students.
>
> Admissions tests make the curriculum rigid (and teaching/learning in schools).[1]

Pressure on Students as a Result of Testing

As the authors emphasize, every factor which is considered decisive in a highly selective situation puts pressure on the high school student. In the case of tests, this pressure is heightened by the fact that they take place a relatively short time before the important admission decision and that the results of a few hours of test taking have such importance. The pressure is normally held in bounds by the fact that the applicants have been confronted with similar tests during their earlier school career and are made familiar with the type of tasks they will encounter in the SAT, ACT, or the College Board Achievements Tests by brochures put out by the testing institutes, and often also by short preparatory courses in high school. This does not exclude the fact, however, that socially disadvantaged students often have additional difficulties ranging beyond any deficiency in developed abilities as a result of not being as well prepared for the character of the tests.

The majority of high school students are not induced by the pressure to "cram" to any great extent in preparation for the SAT or ACT tests. The tests are designed to determine "learned ability," and are so set up that school material introduced during the final two years of high school should play no role to speak of in the understanding of the of the tasks set. Intense preparation in "coaching schools" appears to play a far smaller role than in Japan. According to a study of the College Entrance Examination Board, the coaching schools on average only achieve an improvement in test scores of less than 10 points on the scales of the SAT, which extend from 200 to 800 points, despite the investment in time and money involved (for example, weekend courses over a period of two months). Their effect on the verbal part is minimal. Those high school students, however, who learned little in the way of mathematics can expect a notable increase in their mathematics SAT through coaching. Thus, it is recommended that high school students save themselves the costs of the coaching schools as it is not likely that the decision on acceptance or rejection will be dependent upon 10 points. There are indications, nonetheless, that after several years of reduced popularity such coaching schools are coming into vogue again in the U.S. Although the negative prognoses concerning future occupational opportunities probably induce a number of high school students to give up plans of study, other high school students are for the same reason doubly bent on securing their future through access to the top universities. Judging from the assessments of many teachers and advisors, interest in coaching schools is maintained in general by the fact that high school students do not place faith in official declarations regarding the negligible effect such coaching has. Furthermore, many students hope that they will belong to the minority whose test scores will significantly improve through this intensive preparation.

It is further pointed out that according to some surveys test participants who are in a particularly nervous state going into the test do not receive poorer scores (Fremer and Chandler 1971). Many colleges and universities nonetheless do take such effects of the test situation into consideration. If admissions officers consider the test results of an applicant to be significantly lower than his record would lead one to expect, they may ask the applicant to take the test again. Even when anxiety and additional preparation appear on average to have little effect on test results, the predictive power of test results is limited by the peculiar conditions of measurement. Thus, critics emphasize that important characteristics such as consistency of achievement over a period of time and in different situations and the affective-motivational prerequisites which are thereby indirectly measured receive too short a shrift.

Different Views on Imperfect Prediction of Success

The authors of the paper accept as basically valid the criticism that attempts have been made principally to predict grades in colleges or university study, and that less attention has been paid to "broader aspects of university life and of success in life after the university" (Britell and Schrader). Insight into these limitations of the tests appears widespread in the schools, but people are apparently not very worried about it—at least not in respect to admission at the undergraduate level. This is surprising insofar as many colleges and universities in the U.S. stress objectives other than the advancement of knowledge. I gained the impression from various conversations, however, that the institutions frequently regard this one-sided quality of tests as an aid in easing the burden of legitimizing their admissions decisions. Those who are less interested in other objectives of university education point out that taking noncognitive factors into account during the admissions process would not markedly increase the predictive validity. Champions of the noncognitive benefits of higher education appear overwhelmingly uninterested in any standardization of the measurement of such characteristics in the applicants by means of tests. In addition, it is maintained with visible joy at liberal arts colleges in particular that research has shown no correlation between college grades and professional success other than that the better students are more frequently unhappy in later life.

One can well imagine that pressure will be growing on colleges and universities interested in receiving public subsidy to supply proof that higher education effectively prepares the graduate for later success in life. The testing institutes assume this too. To an increasing degree they are becoming involved in the development of broadly designed tests for admission to professional schools and on "college outcomes." It is in this context that the growing popularity of competency-based assessment or performance tests is to be seen. It is not yet clear what effects this will have on the undergraduate level: whether it will lead to a greater individualization of admission or the widespread use of noncognitive tests.

Measurement of Complex and Creative Thinking

The testing institutes ward off criticism that with their restriction to "multiple-choice" questions entrance examinations fail to measure complex and creative thinking, noting with some justification that on the basis of many years of experience they have succeeded in converting very complex problems into "multiple-choice" questions. Attempts by ETS to develop essay tests and "creativity tests" show, however, that the former tests do not represent the most refined development of testing.

Such alternatives, however, generally meet with two difficulties. First, their evaluation is very elaborate; this means that rationalization pressures induce the institutions of higher education to make cuts in quality. Second, the trial application of such tests has not resulted in any greater predictive validity than is reached with the usual tests. This may have to do with problems in the evaluation of results which are produced in tests with open questions. The vicious circle of predictive validity, however, is certainly also evident here. It may be that creativity tests have slight predictive validity for the very reason that grade-giving at college or university is also based on examinations which are not exactly designed to measure creativity. In both cases, measurement problems may well react back upon the goals and achievements of higher education.

Social Bias in Testing?

In response to criticism that tests discriminate against socially disadvantaged groups, the testing agencies like to refer to empirical studies according to which test results are just as well suited for the prediction of academic success for socially disadvantaged groups as they are for other students. This finding contradicts widespread hopes that socially disadvantaged persons with lower test ratings will be able to recoup their setbacks at college or university, often even at the selective schools. This finding is not surprising, however, for the socially disadvantaged normally enter colleges and universities where the conditions for success are geared not to them, but to "normal" students.

Demand, in fact, is often made that the socially disadvantaged be given access to higher education despite lower prerequisites in order that their previous disadvantage be balanced out by compensatory increased opportunity. Even if the proportion of the socially disadvantaged who are surprisingly successful in their studies should be small, their increased admission to selective schools is being proposed in order to increase the absolute number of cases in which the colleges and universities promote this sort of positive development. At the same time, for example, the the opening up of so famous a university as the City University of New York (CUNY) was motivated by the idea of adjusting the milieu of the school towards the socially disadvantaged.

These two contrary approaches are thoroughly compatible. The tests are not unfair to the socially disadvantaged when the perpetuation of traditions in selective higher education stands unquestioned. The tests are, however, unfair insofar as their existence and regular implementation supports precisely these traditions; this assumes that a removal of such traditions could facilitate the development of the socially disadvantaged student at the college or university and in later life.

Testing: Serving the Universities or the Students?

Whether tests serve the universities more than the students is a question that cannot be settled clearly. The interests of both sides in admission are conflicting. As tests help provide a reason for nonadmission, one could consider the assumption to be valid that tests primarily serve the institutions. Should tests be introduced in Germany, in order to make the rejection of applicants easier and to lessen the pressure put upon the expansion of selective fields, conflicting interests in testing would naturally result. This would hold true in an analogous way for the U.S. if one assumes that without tests the hierarchical system of higher education would be less accepted. If one assumes, however, that the hierarchical system of higher education in the U.S. is natural, tests might be welcomed by applicants as an aid in estimating their chances. The decisive question, therefore, is whether the tests are more effective as a means of legitimizing the existing system of higher education.

Effect of Testing on Curricula

Whether testing has effects upon school curricula depends, according to ETS, primarily on the character of the tests. Achievement tests could be a controlling influence, but according to ETS staff attempts are made to reduce this by the broad foundation of the tests and by involving teachers in test development.

On the whole effects of testing on curricula are kept in bounds in the U.S. by the fact that the most widespread admissions tests are essentially aptitude tests. As these tests developed over the years, the line has gradually ceased to be drawn between aptitude and achievement. ETS emphasizes in SAT a far-reaching independence from curricula. ACT relates more closely to curricula—this is evident both in the division of the subgroups into English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Natural Sciences as well as in the declaration that at least 15% of the tasks require specific knowledge. But even for ACT the concept of "developed ability" is the center of consideration.

The Achievement Tests administered by ETS, which are taken by less than 20% of beginning students each year, are also set up according to the above principles in order to keep the effect on schools within bounds. Such effects are undoubtedly more to be expected in countries with centralized curriculum development where they are often a means of control over uniform curricula. In the U.S., however, more and more states are being forced by financial considerations to cease administering their own achievement tests in the 12th grade. Previously these tests had figured in admission to the state colleges.

Even without centralized curricula such effects on schools can be expected when the students consider success in the tests important. The schools can then be expected to adapt instruction to the tests; should they fail to do so, students will attempt to prepare for the tests on their own. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which this occurs in America.[2]

Achievement tests have some significance for access to the undergraduate level for only a limited number of colleges and disciplines. They do not appear on the whole to affect the atmosphere at high schools. One can assume that the indirect effects of the aptitude tests are greater. In comparison to Japan, where competition in the achievement tests has a considerable impact on secondary schools, the difficulty in bettering aptitude test scores quite possibly has a demotivating effect upon U.S. high school students.

In a number of conversations another effect of aptitude tests was emphasized. Schools which introduce unusual curricula–particularly those which attempt innovations in grading such as the "pass-fail" system--encounter great difficulties because in this situation the colleges and universities can hardly use grades as a basis for consideration and rely mainly on test results. Ambitious parents think this happens more frequently than it actually does, and fearing that their children could be handicapped in admission, they exert a massive pressure on the high schools which deters reform.

For admission to graduate and professional schools achievement tests have a much greater significance than at the undergraduate level. More than half of all graduate applicants participate in ETS Advanced Tests (the achievement tests for many fields at the graduate level) or the entrance examinations for professional schools. To a great extent these are achievement tests. Judging from my conversations such test results often play a more important role in admission than do the results of the aptitude test of the Graduate Record Examinations. Students who wish to attend graduate and professional schools also consider the test results very important and attempt to prepare systematically for admission.

Curricula must take this into consideration, especially at colleges where a large percentage of graduates go on to graduate and professional schools. Here, too, there reigns an atmosphere of competition similar to that in the upper grades of academic secondary school in Germany. According to several people I talked with, during the last several years graduate admission competition has sharpened significantly in the U.S. As financial support for graduate study has become rare, many universities have reduced their enrollments in graduate and professional schools, and occupational prospects for graduates have deteriorated.

In the long run it is the colleges and universities that are most permanently affected by the impact of the tests upon curricula. People have largely become accustomed to this fact and often find positive elements in it, saying that it promotes achievement, serves to separate the wheat from the chaff, gives students a chance to prove themselves under pressure, and gears the undergraduate to graduate studies. There is often not even a consciousness of alternatives such as true cooperation among the students. If this situation is felt to be normal, then one can imagine that people in higher education are little inclined to be sensitive to the effects that college admissions have on secondary education.

---

1. Such an explicit evaluation was not undertaken in the paper mentioned above, but was made clear in a personal conversation with W.B. Turnbull, president of ETS.

2. ETS does make known the results of studies on the small extent to which performance on aptitude tests can be affected by cramming, but has not published corresponding results for achievement tests; if one can interpret this silence as deliberate policy, coaching schools may have an effect in the U.S. as they do in other countries.

VIII

OPEN ADMISSIONS: INTRODUCTION

The foreigner who undertakes a critical review of the current debate on open admissions in the U.S. is initially confronted by the fact that the expansion of higher education is treated in a language which is arcane if not obscure.

Why does one speak of "mass secondary education" when the majority enjoys it (F. Bowles 1963), and of "mass higher education" when more than 15% of the corresponding age group participate in it (Trow 1970)? Does "universal higher education" mean that everyone receives a higher education, or that everyone knows that he may, if he wishes, commute daily to a college or university provided he takes along the required abilities and motivation (Carnegie Commission 1970)? In terms like "free access" does "access" refer to actual enrollment patterns or to the mere chance for access? Semantically speaking, can the word "equality" not only mean that persons receive an equal education, but also that they have a fair chance for the most prestigious education? Does the term "equality of opportunity" refer to the removal of unequal barriers regarding access to particular institutions of education, or to an equal share in attendance, "equality of results" (Coleman 1972), or more aptly, "representative inequality" (Miller 1975)? Is "open admissions" open for everyone who has particular educational prerequisites, or for everyone who would like to attend the institutions in question?

Granted that conceptual disorientation is somewhat alleviated by the fact that many problems are becoming more evident with expansion in education and are often discussed in other countries with an eye towards the U.S. situation, a number of these disorientations have therefore already attained international significance. Nevertheless, one is happy to find Americans who do point out misunderstandings close-at-hand. Thus, Karabel (1972c, p. 42) expresses the opinion: "The distinction between *equality* and *equality of opportunity* is often lost on those who would reform the educational system," and cites the Carnegie Commission as a prominent example of this. Munday and Rever (1971, p. 90) emphasize: "The phrase 'open admissions' suggests the absence of any standards of academic performance in the process of determining the admissibility of a prospective student in the eligibility decision. We call this a connotative definition of open admissions." If one follows customary usage, however, it becomes evident that "open" admissions is generally not truly open.

Asked about the reasons for the vagueness and often propagandistic tone of many concepts in higher education policy, Americans mainly attributed this weakness to advertising purposes in a dual sense. Colleges and universities hope for greater public assistance if they overstate their achievements; at the same time, advocates of different concepts are often prepared to put controversies aside in order to achieve advantages for each participant by means of cooperative student recruitment.

If one were to attempt to counter the lack of clarity of terminology–in particular the term "open admissions"–by means of a precise definition, one would not be doing justice to the actual broad usage of the expression and to the purpose of its usage. The more appropriate course is to mark off one thematic area out of the variety of usage, as a specific framework in which to discuss the most important problems under review.

Munday and Rever (1971) give a helpful point of orientation for this attempt. In their "operational definition" which they undertake on the basis of circulated discussion themes, they show that the starting point is almost always a "criterion of past academic performance for entry." It must be added, however—from the perspective of countries in which higher education expansion is not yet so far advanced—that the agreed upon prerequisites are often kept very low and that a relatively wide expansion of access is envisioned. Were one to overlook this, the ideal case of open admissions would obtain precisely in systems such as existed in Germany for a long time where every graduate from an academic secondary school was able to register in the university, in the field of his choice, without submitting to any supplementary selection processes.[1]

Linked with this is the second restriction to open admissions which Munday and Rever mention and has also already been touched upon: not every institution of higher education is open. Within the higher education system of a state "open admissions" colleges exist side by side with semi-selective and highly selective institutions. Munday and Rever mention as a third restriction: "Almost all define their constituency by geography" (*ibid.*, p. 92).

To a large extent the following treatment of the discussion will conform to the approach of Munday and Rever. To begin with we shall review the debate on "Who should go to college"—the limits of the expansion of the higher education system. Following this, coexistence of open and selective admissions will be discussed. (Regional limiting of access, its merits and demerits will not be considered here as it is only of subordinate importance for the basic problems of open admissions.) As a third area, admissions procedures as they exist at so-called "open admissions" colleges will be treated. I shall conclude by describing some of my personal impressions of the debate on open admissions.

---

1. For this reason, Burn (1977b, p. 10) says: "Open access . . . can be basically elitist. . . ."

IX
OPEN ADMISSIONS: WHO SHOULD GO TO COLLEGE?

The concept of opening the higher education system to practically everyone declined in popularity during the 1970s. Up to that time calculations of desirable long-term expansion rates had grown with actual student numbers. Immediately after World War II when not even one young person out of five was taking up college study, it was already assumed that half of the youth population was suitable for a two-year course of studies and at least 32% for four-year study (cf. Hansen and Witmer 1971). In 1970, when it was assumed that before long one-half of the corresponding age group would enroll,[1] proposals went as far as two years of study for everyone and four years of study for 50% of the age group (Rever 1971; Hansen and Witmer 1971). Now, however, the term "universal higher education" is used less frequently, and predictions or proposals for the future are more cautious.

In 1975, the Carnegie Foundation (1975, p. 112) stated: "Universal access, although it is still professed to be a major policy objective, cannot be said to be at the top of the agenda for all the parties at interest. Administrators at many institutions are more likely to lay primary stress on quality, on the need for flexibility, and on institutional survival. Legislators, who are responsive to local constituencies, are likely to be more concerned about access, diversity, economy, and the ability of systems to change. Faculty members often stress the need for institutional autonomy and for faculty control within it." If one compares

80

the discussion at the beginning of the seventies (cf. for example, Furniss, 1971, Wilson and Mills 1972) with the current debate, however, a noteworthy shift in position appears to have taken place later in the seventies. Although the scepticism of representatives of higher education with regard to a further opening of higher education seems to have diminished, the concept of universal higher education has lost ground with the general public and particularly in political discussion. Whereas a few years ago many representatives of higher education felt themselves under an "egalitarian," noneducational pressure from the public, now the schools are predominantly concerned about the the public having little understanding for the expansion of higher education.

Many representatives of colleges and universities, both at the beginning of the seventies and today, referred to the formula of the Carnegie Commission that universal higher education would mean the possibility of access "for those who wish and can profit from it" (Carnegie Commission 1970; also cf. Furniss 1971, pp. 13-14). This means that ability and motivation are the determining factors. For society at large questions of at least equal importance were the usefulness of a higher education for individuals and society, the relationship between expansion in education and social structure, and problems in financing. It is precisely in regard to such topics that opinions have shifted in the past few years. The declining readiness to provide public financing for the schools as well as the lack of applicants induced the colleges and universities to lobby more vigorously than before for the greatest possible measure of open access to higher education. In the presentation of the most important themes, no clear-cut differences will be drawn between the debate around 1970 and that during the subsequent decade. The attempt will be made, however, to make clear the shifts in emphasis.

Open Admissions and Manpower Requirements

In the public debate on universal higher education the idea was still frequently advanced that a demand for a growing number of highly qualified manpower existed (cf. Hausman 1972). A great shortage of college graduates was even predicted for 1975 (Folger, Astin and Bayer 1970), although there were opposing statements (e.g. Berg 1970), or more cautious formulations regarding economic utility (Hansen and Witmer 1972). Only a few years later, prognoses that about 95% of college graduates in the next decade would be able to find a more or less appropriate occupation (Bureau of Labor Statistics 1974) were regarded as too optimistic, and the thesis of a large-scale overqualification (Freeman 1976) was widely accepted. In any event labor market arguments were now generally employed against open access (cf. the survey presented by Boyer 1977). Such arguments were supplemented by the theses that college study was also hardly worthwhile for the individual, and that a widespread degree of frustration was to be expected from graduates who would not find appropriate work. The argument that the complex industrial world of the 21st century will only be mastered by means of a great number of graduates from higher education appears now to be advanced only infrequently in support of a further expansion of higher education.

There are different possible ways of calling into question such pessimistic job market arguments. Further societal utility in expansion of higher education cannot be excluded (Anderson and Bowman 1974). A comparison on the international scale suggests that assumptions on manpower requirements depend only to a limited extent on technological or economic developments and change quickly. Attending college under present conditions seems to bring a greater benefit for individuals than is often assumed (cf. Solmon 1973). Furthermore, a certain chance for upward mobility by means of a higher education cannot be contested (Karabel and Astin 1975; Holmstrom 1976). Finally, it appears that the individual's general need for education in order to master his different roles in society is growing more than occupational requirements.

Most representatives of higher education, however, tend to represent labor market arguments as not being decisive for the development of the colleges and universities. Boyer, for example, says that "... to argue that college fails unless our graduates get only certain kinds of jobs or get wealthier than other people is to limit our goals to a single one; it justifies college on the basis of the perpetuation of class distinctions" (1977, p. 59). In a collection of articles put out by the American Association for Higher Education, adjusting higher education planning according to manpower needs is even called "fascistic" (DeMott, 1976). In the course of my inquiry in the U.S. it became clear to me that the contradictory results of the prognoses and their rapid changing, as well as rapid changes in the market for college graduates, are factors which favor the conclusion that the college or university could hardly orient itself to the labor market even if there were a basic readiness to do so.

This disinclination to orient the perspectives of the schools to job market conditions is not universal. The increasing degree of "vocationalism," particularly among the less prestigious colleges, and the strong market-orientation of institutions with an emphasis on natural sciences and technology prompt one to doubt whether this disinclination is present in a majority of the colleges and universities. But in many publicized statements made by representatives of higher education the clearly dominant tendency is not to regard labor market conditions as being a decisive criterion for or against a further expansion of the higher education system.

Open Admissions and Nonoccupational Benefits of Higher Education

The nonoccupational "benefits" of a college education are frequently brought forward as justification for a further expansion of higher education (cf. for example Keniston and Gerzon 1972; Lenning 1974). The strong weight of these arguments clearly shows "the historical American faith in the power of education to remedy social ills and to contribute to the democratization process" (Menacker 1975, p. 86). The assumption that an expansion in education brings about a rise in civic responsibility and promotes desirable social behavior seems to find a broader degree of public support in the United States than it does in most other countries.

Doubts are also circulating, however, whether the colleges do in fact bring about such achievements in socialization. Some economists charge the colleges with simply attempting to evade the problems of the relation between education and occupation by employing overstated propaganda in the above direction (cf. Freeman 1973; Windham 1976). The methodological problems resulting from the research on these "benefits" is that while one can establish such differences between graduates of higher education and the rest of the population, the question remains open. First, are these differences brought about by the institutions or by parental influence and/or hereditary factors. Second, is it clear that higher education could produce the same socialization effects among the majority that it achieves with a selected minority? The fear of many representatives of higher education—that the new additional students do not have the same motivations as the traditional students—illustrates how widespread this doubt is among the institutions themselves. This is also confirmed indirectly by educational experiments which use as a starting point the various motives, goals, political concepts and value orientations of the "new" students. Such a diversification of educational goals, which question many past educational efforts that were oriented towards integration, may be very sensible. It can clearly not be legitimized, however, with reference to the traditional socialization accomplishments of college education. On the contrary, precisely such alterations of educational goals for nontraditional students are regarded with scepticism, and are likely to make a further expansion of higher educational institutions less popular today than several years ago.

With a further expansion of higher education, a stronger bond between college and community is assumed, not only in the sense that the colleges integrate almost the entire range of public postsecondary education, but that they also respond to a variety of community needs. At many colleges, for example, counseling has advanced far beyond the boundaries of an adjunct service for students. Thus, in many women's centers attention is given to social aid for women who are not enrolled or who are intending to do so. Community problems are not only increasingly chosen as the subject of course offerings, but are linked with social action. In the fact of the growing wealth of society, alongside of growing unemployment, social disintegration, and high qualification of a growing percentage of the population, it is quite conceivable that social services in the U.S. will lose the character of voluntary charitable action and become part of an occupational community organization (e.g. Berger 1976); institutions of higher education could themselves become the organizational centers for such tasks. Such perspectives, however, are not always judged in a positive way within higher education.

The nonoccupational educational and socialization accomplishments of the institutions are accepted in the U.S. as arguments which support further expansion of higher education. This is also true for the immediate services of the colleges to the community. These arguments, however, clearly do not have enough weight either in the colleges and universities or with the general public to be able to overcome the other reservations against expansion.

Higher Education: A Basic Human Right?

A further expansion of higher education was supported also by the argument that access to the institutions of higher education represents a basic human right (cf. Boyer 1977). Even if one is not of the opinion that almost all people should attend college, the following answer to the question "who should go to college" was typical of the mood of many advocates of universal higher education: "We are no longer prepared to tell anyone that he should not try to go" (Birnbaum 1971, p. 36). In addition, the desire to overcome the disadvantages of the socially underprivileged in access to the institutions of higher learning gained public support. At the beginning of the seventies it appears that there was general acceptance that growing attention should be directed towards easing access to higher education for those groups which were underrepresented in college—or, at least, for those disadvantaged individuals for whom a successful course of studies was anticipated. Although the concept of universal higher education remained controversial in its basic elements—e.g. what abilities and motivations were the prerequisites of a course of study; to what extent were public funds necessary; should public financing of higher education direct itself primarily towards the socially disadvantaged; should growth be linked to a removal or to an expansion of the hierarchy in higher educational institutions. Additional efforts towards easing access to higher education were hardly contested during the early seventies, but subsequently they have become more controversial.

Open Admissions and Minimum Requirements

One point of concern for people who criticize the strong consideration given to the socially disadvantaged is directed against a considerable decline of minimum cognitive standards for college attendance. This concern is understandable if one considers the problems already existing. A case reported in a Chicago newspaper told of a graduate of a four-year college who lost his job a number of times because he could barely read and write; finally he complained to the college that his studies had done him no good. Applicants are often admitted to college even though they fail to bring the reading, writing and mathematical knowledge that one normally expects from graduates of the ninth grade. Even at a semiselective institution such as the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, whose freshmen clearly have test scores above average, almost one quarter of these first-year students assert that they need "special assistance in mathematical skills, reading skills and writing skills" (Siddiqui). In one conversation I had, it was estimated that at the open admissions college in question, more than 80% of the freshmen required remedial courses, and certainly the standards there were set lower than at selective colleges and universities. Many schools provide remedial courses and laboratories for individualized compensatory efforts. This does not suffice, however, to guarantee a specific level; the greater the percentage of students who do not have the prerequisites considered necessary at a particular college, the more the school sees itself obliged to label those courses which are understood to be remedial courses as normal ones and to give normal credits for them. This is done so as not to demoralize the students and thus further increase the drop out rate, which in the community colleges averages about 50% during the first year. The special programs for socially disadvantaged students at the colleges have generally not brought the success originally expected.

Objections to setting minimum requirements nevertheless have plausibility. In the first place, in light of the only slight predictability of success in studies no hard and fast boundary can be set which would not exclude a number of competent persons. Second, often cited are examples of famous members of ethnic minorities who previously had been continuously discouraged by their teachers, friends, etc. Open access must hence provide a counterbalancing encouragement, even when the probability of success is not high. Third, the objection is raised that a right to education cannot be wiped out by arguments regarding foreseeable failure, that there exists a right to try and, if need be, fail, and that the education up to even early termination of studies is normally not in vain and indeed represents an enrichment for the individual.

The fear that a further expansion of access would bring about a lowering of standards among first-year students was expressed by representatives of colleges and universities around 1970 in particular. Since that time, in view of a smaller number of applicants, most colleges and universities are ready to lower admission standards, and are much more tolerant on the question of minimum standards. In the public political sphere the readiness to make a course of study possible for "low achievers" has declined radically; people speak with concern about the decline in test scores which they see caused by educational success having been made too easy. Efforts in behalf of socially disadvantaged persons have declined in popularity.

Open Admissions and Students' Motivation

Representatives of higher education expressed the reservation that further expansion would make it more difficult to motivate students academically. On occasion it is maintained that only about one quarter of students are really interested in their studies (e.g. Bird 1975). In the expansion of the sixties, "involuntary attendance" (based on status motives) allegedly increased greatly (Trow 1971); an aggravation of this development was considered likely.

These arguments are understandable in view of the problems many high schools face. Institutions of higher learning do not wish to become, as high schools have, a storage center for uninterested persons. These arguments, however, are criticized by many others as a sign of elitist arrogance and unwillingness to reform. In estimates that only a minority of students are motivated, usually those students are termed not motivated wh[illegible] readily enthusiastic about the traditional course off[illegible] even though they basically consider it important to attend college. In such cases, so goes the argument, the school must be able to work as a motivator, whether by revising teaching methods or by altering or augmenting the curricula (for example, Cross 1976). This discussion has remained fairly constant throughout the seventies.

Financing Open Admissions

The readiness of state and federal agencies to finance further expansion of higher education has clearly diminished. In the early seventies impressive programs with major financial consequences were still being initiated. Many states were prepared to expand building programs, particularly of community colleges, until practically every citizen could attend college by simply commuting from home. There also arose an impressive scholarship system, particularly through steps taken on the federal level, by which at least a partial financing of studies was made possible for about one half of all students: about 90% of the total scholarship aid made available was distributed on the basis of need and only 10% according to achievement (cf. Fife 1975).

Since that time, the political climate has changed. The majority of states have reduced the relative amount of expenditures for higher education, or at least the expansion of programs. The federal government has begun to cut back substantially on its scholarship programs. Four interdependent explanations are given for this development.

First, the basic political mood of society in the 1960s which favored special steps taken for socially disadvantaged persons has changed. In describing the fifties and sixties, E.M. Norton (1976, p. 201) believes: "Most of the development towards deeper equality took shape and substance from the 1960s, a period characterized by the upset of social convention and injustice. The sixties saw a deep reaction to the spirit of the fifties which was a decade rooted more in the notion that all men should be alike than they be equal."[2] Doubts were sometimes expressed in my consulting about how serious efforts towards equality of opportunity, let alone social equality, actually had been. But people were unanimous in agreeing that in the course of the 1970s the political pendulum has now swung back towards an emphasis on social differences, though not as strong as in the fifties.

It is evident also in many recommendations regarding higher education policy. In the sixties most proposals for measures on behalf of the socially disadvantaged had as their starting point a critique of the below average representation of these groups in institutions of higher education. Whereas these implicitly raised equal representation to a goal, the Carnegie Foundation (1975, pp. 113-124) expressed the opinion that the highest goal one could set would be that the poorer half be represented in a proportion of two thirds to the richer half.

Beyond this, doubt as to the social relevance of education has risen in general. Regardless of whether people had expected more contributions to equality, to growth in the economy, to social integration, to individual advancement or to other goals, they are less inclined today than they were in the sixties to believe the higher education system capable of effecting great changes. At a time when many other societal tasks such as health care, environmental protection and reducing social problems have moved into the public consciousness, education has lost much ground in the determination of political priorities.

A third explanation relates to the general financial crisis of the states. Even if the states were willing to continue to devote the same proportion of their expenditures for higher education as they did at the beginning of the seventies, a further expansion of colleges and universities would be unrealistic.

These explanations are frequently expressed by representatives of higher education critical of public policies. However, the view is also presented that the colleges and universities brought about this swing in mood by not being prepared to carry out needed reforms at a time when there was a greater political readiness to expand colleges and universities and that the missing readiness and ability to adjust to an opening-up of the institutions not only made the concept of universal higher education appear an empty phrase, but also destroyed the public readiness to preserve the present dimensions of higher education.

Colleges and universities are thereby reproached for not having attempted to adjust to the change in the student body. It is alleged, for example, that the attitude of most teachers towards their tasks, especially their teaching, has scarcely changed (Cross 1976). The opinion is also presented that the special efforts of the institutions on behalf of socially disadvantaged students were unsuccessful due to lack of ability to adjust to nontraditional students. Thus Gordon (1975, p. 19) writes: "Perhaps one of the most important outcomes of collegiate compensatory programs is the evidence they give of postsecondary education's weakness in dealing with student diversities."

It is further alleged that many questionable attempts to recruit students at any price and to sell them any wished-for or supposedly needed education cheaply has discredited the idea of the expansion of higher education. This criticism culminates in the reproach that emphasis on higher education diversity as a blanket defense of the system underscored all of these mistakes: that the reference to diversity can convey that the system is so capable of adjustment that no reforms are necessary, to ascribe the need for reforms to other branches of higher education than one's own, and finally to regard every institution and practice of education, no matter how peculiar, as desirable in that its existence is proof enough that it serves existing "needs." President Wood of the University of Massachusetts summarized this criticism in the statement: "Diversity is a camouflage of the unwillingness to reform."[3]

The debate on open admissions, insofar as it refers to the question "who should go to college?" appears to take place today more than ever between the colleges and universities on the one side and the public political sphere on the other. While among the public, the readiness to support a broad expansion of colleges and universities is diminishing, many representatives of higher education have in recent times frequently advocated an open access policy–not the last reason for this being the desire to secure the financial survival of the school in question. Certainly many representatives of higher education express scepticism about a further expansion of the system, but differently than a decade ago. This scepticism is usually relativized by the hope that college education can enrich everyone, as the following statement by Thresher conveys: "There is no such thing as an unfit or unqualified seeker after education" (quoted by Karabel 1972, p. 43). Anderson and Bowman (1974, p. 13) have also stated: "It is noteworthy that few of the critics today suggest remedying what they deplore by shrinking the system of higher education." According to Anderson and Bowman, it is the government's financial crisis which is frequently employed as an argument against expansion."

The reservations on the part of the institutions and the controversy within higher education itself revolve around the question of whether open admissions should be restricted to one sector of higher education or whether it should extend to all institutions. This question has not been discussed with the same intensity by the public at large. The main issue in the colleges and universities has been the coexistence of open admissions and selective admissions. Behind the objections on the part of representatives of higher education against a further expansion of higher education there often lurks the fear that expansion could hurt the selective areas of higher education financially.

---

1. There was, however, a very widespread overestimation of actual numbers—partly due to statistical problems; cf. Hamilton and Wright, 1975.
2. Gordon (1975) emphasizes that in the fifties (even before the Sputnik-shock) attention was paid to the search for talent, while in the sixties there was a stronger desire to help individual students in their development.
3. Remarks given at a meeting of the German-U.S. Study Group on Access to Higher Education, November 1976.

X

OPEN AND SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS

The debate on the coexistence of open admissions and selective admissions in the U.S. currently appears to stir up emotions far more than discussion on universal higher education. As mentioned, the controversy is especially great between different factions within the system of higher education.

In the U.S., as in other countries, there developed a "meritocratic elitism," as Karabel and Astin (1975, p. 36) call it—an intermediary form between meritocracy and an elitarian system. Evidence of achievements during high school is usually the basis of decision to allow access to the most attractive areas in higher education and in professional life. The traditional elite enjoys advantages in genetic background, socialization, and education. The rest have a chance of success, and sorting them on the basis of achievement gives the appearance of being just and fair to both the traditional elite and the upwardly mobile.

Running counter to this general model, which molds the admissions process in industrialized countries, are two characteristics peculiar to the United States. On the one hand, the favoritism towards particularly wealthy applicants who do not meet academic requirements is, as already noted, frequent and unabashed. On the other hand, there is great readiness to depart from set standards of higher education in order to allow the socially disadvantaged and low achievers to enjoy a higher education.

For a long time it seemed as though this mixture of elitism, meritocracy and democratic ideals of education would solidify in an increasingly hierarchical arrangement of admissions standards concomitant with the expansion of higher education, and that this would be accepted as the suitable synthesis. In the 1960s, growing educational aspirations were met with an intensive development of community colleges and other less selective institutions. Although during this development, a large number of previously open admissions colleges made access more difficult (Willingham 1970) and social selectivity at the most renowned universities remained for the most part unchanged (Karabel and Astin 1975, p. 396), this development was often celebrated as a milestone towards the realization of equality of opportunity.

Initially the polarization of open admissions and selective admissions apparently had a pacifying effect on both the social and the academic elite. What is astonishing for the foreign observer, however, is how satisfied many lower ranking colleges also seemed to be with this state of affairs. The lobby of two-year colleges praised the development—for example with such euphemistic rhetoric as the book title *Breaking the Access Barriers: a Profile of Two-Year Colleges* (Medsker and Tillery 1971). Generally speaking representatives of low-ranking colleges cannot be said to accept the hierarchy of colleges and universities, but compared with the situation in other countries these institutions display notable self-confidence.

People with whom I talked about this in the U.S. generally saw no way of explaining this phenomenon in sociological or pedagogical terms, and instead usually went into the religious sphere for words: every college or university lives from the belief in its specific "mission;" just as every American assumes that God is to be found in his particular denomination and not in all the rest. So for the individual college!

At the end of the sixties an energetic debate on the coexistence of open and selective admissions caught fire, sparked among other things by the growing financial difficulties of the private institutions and by the growing aspirations of ethnic minorities. As this debate scarcely differs in the individual arguments from the present one it need not be presented separately.

While the debate on "universal higher education" appears to have cooled off during the course of the seventies, discussion about the coexistence of open and selective admissions has not diminished in intensity (for example, cf. several articles in Vermilye 1976). Social ranking, to be sure, is once again more strongly favored in the basic sociopolitical mood of the seventies, but differences in rank among the colleges and universities have become matters of more conscious attention. The expansion of higher education made people more aware that it is not attending college or university *per se*, but rather the "quality" of the school which facilitates access to higher positions. It was the increasing debate on the danger of "overqualification" in the seventies which strengthened this awareness, and thus also strengthened the debate on the suitability of the hierarchical structure.

In my opinion, the most important themes for discussion revolve around the pros and cons of a special sector of higher education responsible for high quality, the difficulties of meritocracy and equality of opportunity, the "needs" of students in general, and, in the broadest sense, the demands which society places on higher education.

Open Admissions and the Training of the Academic Elite

The most popular argument in favor of the preservation of a strong institutional hierarchy is the concern for training the academic elite and for scholarly development. Arguments of the following type are frequently advanced: "No one wants to be operated on by a surgeon who got his license as a gift, or defended by a lawyer who bought his admission to the bar. Every time we go up in an airplane it becomes a matter of life and death to us that the credentials given air traffic controllers be entirely honest ones" (Silber 1976, p. 112; cf. also the review of the debate made by DeMott 1976). The concern is frequently expressed that egalitarian pressure poses a threat both to special financing of what is considered the most valuable sector of higher education as well as to the maintenance of highly selective access to this area. Finally, support for a separate elite education is often capped with the thesis that the promotion and protection of knowledge is the primary task of the institution of higher learning (Trow 1970).

The debate on these notions shows that at their base lie four theses regarding institutional conditions for the promotion of an academic elite.

1. It is assumed that the quality of education at a school largely depends upon a high quality of beginning students; the quality of the output is supposed to be insured by the quality of the input. In response to this argument, one could object that every high-ranking university could practice open admissions and later flunk out those students who cannot keep up with the standards. In practice, however, colleges mainly tend to take into account the actual abilities of students when setting standards of achievement. A policy of open admissions and rigid screening afterwards might be a less tolerable way to find capable students than would be selection during the admissions process to higher education (cf. Turnbull 1971).

   It is also argued that those who favor high admissions standards at some institutions do not ascribe to the educational process the strength to create quality: "paradoxically, 'quality' seems to reside less in factors internal to educational process than in the selective exclusion of people from this process." (Karabel 1972c, p. 38). The only attempt made is "to pick the winner" (Astin

1976). Open admissions schools, on the other hand, are called upon to provide quality education themselves (Birenbaum 1971; Cross 1976).

2. Closely connected with the first thesis is the assumption that the quality of students is clearly recognizable at the time of admission. For advocates of the separate training of elites, the relatively high uncertainty of predicting success in studies at the time of admission does not seem a decisive argument. Faith in the high predictive validity of the admissions criteria and the dependence of college output upon the input are both summed up in the sentence "water in a milk carton is still water" (Silber 1976, p. 113). More frequently, however, the opinion is expressed that sufficient possibilities exist for talents which remained undiscovered during the admissions process to develop at a less prestigious institution and perhaps later on to transfer to a renowned university. The controversy over these two assumptions is scarcely worthy of scholarly debate, regardless of whether one measures the "value added," the prediction of success in studies, or the likelihood of subsequent transfer from institutions with lower admissions standards to those with higher.

   In any event, a comparison with countries in which the higher education system is not so extensive paradoxically suggests that separate training of elites can be defended more easily in a "democratized" system of higher education. To illustrate: the average test score in the verbal part of the SAT for beginning students at community colleges in Massachusetts during the mid-seventies was 396, and thus still under the 400 level. This has been postulated recently by many politicians as the minimum borderline for a meaningful college education. One can assume that the minority of students who attain the associate degree at community college and who then transfer to the state university highest in rank—whose freshmen have an average test score of 480—can reach normal levels of achievement (cf. Siddiqui 1976;

Beals 1976). This is understandable in view of the dispersion of test scores at individual schools and the uncertainty of predictions. Such findings make it easier for the schools to allow a transfer from one school to another.

In the same state, however, there are many private schools where the average test score lies at over 500, and even some—such as Harvard, MIT, Smith, and Williams—where the average is over 600 (cf. College Entrance Examination Board 1975). Despite arguments regarding the uncertainty of predictions and the possible accomplishments of a school, it seems highly unlikely that an average freshman at a community college could partitipate successfully in courses such as are offered at MIT. Just because these extremes are always visible in such a diverse system, however, the possibility of providing first class education and at the same time having a degree of latitude in entrance requirements, such as were discussed in many European countries concerning *Gesamthochschule* concept, are dismissed too easily in the United States.

3. Third, it is assumed that the advancement of the best students is most probable in a student body relatively homogeneous in level of achievement. This argument is controversial. On the one hand, several studies suggest "that a gifted student at an unselective institution does not mysteriously lose his talents" (Karabel 1972c, p. 35). For instance, studies of the City University of New York suggest the academic achievements of the better students are not influenced negatively by the great heterogeneity of the students as a result of the "open admissions" policy. On the other hand, there is the so-called "frogpond effect," according to which a part of the good students, when they remain among themselves, will always become discouraged (cf. the review made by Alexander and Eckland 1976). Harvard takes this difficulty into account when justifying its admission of academically less qualified applicants.

4. Fourth, it is postulated that one should not risk endangering cognitive advancement of the academic elite for the sake of other goals, such as a broader social experience and stimulation of the elite or a pedagogical advancement of the other students through contact with the elite. This argument regards as an unnecessary jeopardization of the academic elite and of cultural and scientific progress precisely such ideas as those at CUNY—that the character of an elite institution should be shaped, among other things, by the milieu of the "man on the street" (Harrington 1975), and that superior teachers and researchers render important services in devoting part of their time to less gifted students.

In these arguments on behalf of "quality" schools, it is hard to say whether in the final analysis the decisive factor is the concern for a high scholarly standard or the preservation of a particular elite culture. More reference is likely to be made to a scholarly level as this appears to be a more politically neutral argument for the preservation of separate elite education. The problem with this argument is that current elite education is considered good. One could just as well assume, though, that the real question revolves around a mobilization of talents, that the medical students who emerge from the competition for a study slot are not the most suitable ones, and that a meaningful tradition of culture suffers when its bearers are familiar with only a relatively limited milieu. These arguments all speak for a loss in quality in the academic elite through the emphasis on selective admissions. It is evident, at least, that the "quality" argument does not speak as clearly in favor of the preservation of a special sphere with selective admissions.

Meritocracy or Equality of Opportunity?

In the debate on the coexistence of open and selective admissions, the relation between meritocracy and equal opportunity is discussed in more detail than are the other aspects treated here. Opponents of this coexistence are inclined to stress this problem, but many advocates also make detailed use of it in their arguments.

The opponents in this discussion normally impute completely different sociopolitical positions to one another. The advocates of this coexistence call their opponents "egalitarians," while they in return are tagged "elitists" (cf. Martin 1976, Wilson 1970). On the whole, this debate has a relatively homogeneous basis: its final supposition is that the U.S. public wants neither a meritocratic elitism nor an egalitarian society. The idea is rather a primarily meritocratic admission to higher education which, however, is adjusted to a limited extent in behalf of the disadvantaged. The system should thus be directed primarily towards removing barriers against attending higher education for the gifted, but it must also prove itself in the visible success of disadvantaged persons and in opportunities for low achievers. The debate's key function for both parties is to enable both to interpret their own position as consonant with this ideal.[1]

According to advocates of the coexistence of open and selective admissions, this synthesis, the product of an unbalanced compromise of differing principles, is best achieved when the element of social chance dominates in admission to some form of higher education (in particular to the open admissions area) and in access to the "quality" area of higher education. Critics of this position advance the view that widening access to a second-class area of higher education is only a pseudo-opportunity, and that in access to the selective area there exist stronger elitist barriers acting against opportunity determined by merit. According to this position both problems can be solved only by a large-scale or complete opening of access to the entire system of higher education.

If access to higher education is regarded as a real and not a pseudo-opportunity for sharing in a precious societal good, this implies that all institutions of higher education are fundamentally equivalent in value to the students. It would be a senseless trick to stress equalization of opportunity in access to higher education if this assumption of a fundamental equivalence did not exist. But the paradoxical nature of the development in higher education lies in the fact that in a hierarchically ordered society, in which socioeconomic status and other benefits are in some measure allotted in accordance with success in school, such a fundamental equivalence of a college education becomes more questionable as the percentage of the population who come to enjoy a college education becomes greater.

Such a debate over fundamental equivalence raises questions of evaluation which in the long run remain unresolvable. But one can point to a whole series of notable differences which question this assumption. One can ask whether it is consonant with this sort of equal opportunity that the distribution of financial and personal resources favors the elite sector of higher education to the extent it does (cf. Astin 1976). Second, many low-prestige colleges are so overburdened with problems (as the following chapter will show) that they are less in a position to promote each student's individual abilities than are the more prestigious universities. Third, the lower a college's ranking, the less likely it is that the beginning student will ever complete his education. Fourth, judging from the relation between education and income, it appears that the dividing line runs between the high school and the junior college degrees on the one hand and the bachelor and the graduate degrees on the other; in this sense graduates of two-year colleges are more aptly labeled "high school postgraduates" (Anderson and Bowman 1974, p. 36).

Fifth, the debate on the difficulties college graduates face in finding "commensurate" jobs—to the extent this debate is at all supported by facts—shows that there is less and less support for the fundamental equivalence of college degrees in the relationship between higher education and professions. It is therefore not surprising that the question of "equality of access" (to higher education) is gradually being supplanted by the question of "equality of choice," in other words, equality of access to particular institutions or to ones of equal rank (cf. Fife 1975). The long-lasting, relatively stable compromise between the principles of meritocracy and social opportunity has thus been placed unavoidably in question by the expansion of higher education and by changes in the relation between education and opportunity in life.

The discussion throughout the seventies gives the impression that an attempt is being made to once again stabilize the compromise between these two principles by pulling down barriers that exist *within* the system of higher education. The emphasis on "transfer" and "articulation" (for example, cf. Menacker 1975) now occupies the position which "equality of access" enjoyed a decade ago. Naturally it can be easily shown that meritocratic considerations play a much greater role in the debate over transfer, particularly from two-year to four-year institutions. In this regard, the new compromise cannot replace the old one.

Today, however, it is perhaps accepted as a replacement because the general sociopolitical mood of the mid-seventies is more and more removed from the principle of "opportunity for everyone." Primary emphasis is given to the probability that the transfer student will actually show satisfactory achievements in the four-year college. At the same time, though, the discussion on transfer compacts for public systems of higher education makes clear that the universities are also expected to give community college students a chance despite continuing reservations about the difference in standards.

In the past, the difficulties involved in moving vertically within the system of higher education indicated, inasmuch as data were available, that there could be no talk of equivalence of the various areas of higher education. Karabei and Astin (1975, p. 383) summarize the findings regarding dropouts, transfer possibilities, etc. in the statement: "Attending a college of high quality also eases passage through the system of higher education itself." It remains to be determined whether the more vigorous efforts in behalf of transfer have in fact changed the situation substantially; the estimates expressed in conversations on this matter varied widely. Scepticism does seem in order, however, because, for the most part, inadequate studies are cited as proof of the change in situation, while convincing research does not yet exist.

The paradox in the unequally balanced compromise described above is that the elitist character of access to the selective area is strengthened precisely by the attempt to promote social opportunities through access to the nonselective areas and transfer possibilities. In my judgment this becomes clear in the information and counseling system for potential students.

Excursus: The Information and Counseling System

If one compares the amount of information and activity devoted to counseling in the U.S. with the situation in most European countries, one is struck with the quantity involved; such quantity is a necessary product of a less coordinated and less unified system. If one compares the situation in the U.S. with that in Japan, one has the impression that many potential college applicants in the U.S. are only vaguely informed and are also systematically encouraged to underestimate the hierarchy that exists among the institutions of higher learning.

A few personal impressions may illustrate. The advertising of the individual colleges—which some Americans think does not satisfy the most elementary principles of consumer protection—does not even begin to make clear the significance of the choice of the college or university for one's course of studies and opportunities in life. Public measures taken to promote a diversified system reinforce this situation. Many advisers and teachers tend to play down the differences in prestige among colleges when advising the average high school student; realistic information is hard to obtain. Specialists whom I interviewed estimated that only about 10% to 30% of college applicants are relatively well informed.

It appears to be almost impossible for a student to gain a clear picture of the cost of a college education (cf. Weathersby 1976, p. 118). The lack of information was made particularly clear by a survey of 11th grade students. The statement "The English and Math skills of freshmen are about the same from one college to another" was answered with 'no' by only 52% of the high school juniors–2% more than one could expect if they were answering on a purely chance basis. The researchers made this comment: "This item . . . dramatically illustrates the number of students who are misinformed about reality factors in the world of work and education. Unfortunately, career decisions are influenced by just such misinformation." (Prediger, Roth, and Noeth 1973, p. 29). The attractiveness of open admissions existing alongside the selective area and the success of an admissions situation not determined to any extreme degree by competition are both to some extent the result of misinformation.

Differential Admissions Standards and Needs of the Students

In discussions concerning the coexistence of open and selective admissions much is said about the needs of the students, particularly of those outside the elite sector. The thesis is often advanced that the existence of differing admissions standards corresponds to the abilities and needs of the students. Boyer (1977, p. 57) underlines this argument with the statement "that equality of institutions . . . means for the students inequality of opportunity."

Both in literature and in conversations, many reservations were expressed about the harmonistic interpretation of the way the institutional hierarchy relates to the needs of the students, though many of these reservations did not proceed from the assumption that opening the entire system of higher education would solve all these difficulties:

- Many schools of lesser rank tend to be poor imitations of the renowned institutions. They offer similar programs at a lower level but this does not necessarily correspond to the needs of the students.
- The lower the ranking of an institution, the less it is in a position to secure a homogeneous student body and the harder it is to give students personal attention.
- It is precisely those students whose abilities appear slight at the beginning of their studies who need special help in developing their abilities (cf. Cross 1971, 1976; Astin 1976). Expenditures per student, however, are all the greater, the higher the admissions standards at a college or university.
- Students are in no position to find the college that best suits their needs, and colleges often cannot afford to take only those students whose needs they can satisfy.
- The argument that the diversity of colleges and universities would disappear if there were no hierarchical systems of higher education (e.g. Wilson 1970) shows that what advocates of a hierarchical system understand by "student's needs" is little more than differences in the level of education.
- If the system of higher education is supposed to serve social change by integrating minorities or developing abilities, then the admissions system cannot be tailored to the needs of students as is often advocated.

In view of the fact that students' abilities and interests do differ, it is understandable that support is easily found for the thesis that differing admissions standards correspond to the needs of students. The efforts of many lower-ranking colleges, in particular, are very impressive. But when one considers the barriers against access to sectors of higher education (such as medicine), the poor quality of information available, the high dropout rate and the intensity with which some colleges seek to sell their program as corresponding to students' needs, one cannot understand the optimism that the present mixture of open and selective admissions, and the structure of higher education that goes with it, is the best that could possibly be attained.

Differential Admission Standards and Societal Demands

Both advocates as well as critics of the existing differences in admissions standards and the coexistence of open and selective admissions make frequent reference to society's demands on higher education.

In addition to the three areas discussed above, further demands are also postulated. There is widespread opinion that the existing diversity among colleges corresponds in large measures to manpower requirements. Apart from the preservation of particular "quality" areas, it is assumed that the "open admissions" sector adapts itself well to manpower requirements. It is often pointed out that the system of higher education is governed by market conditions only to a limited degree as a result of public subsidies, functions not connected with professional training, etc. It is nonetheless frequently assumed that there exists a healthy pressure on colleges and universities to conform to the needs of the employment system, either brought about by student wishes (Freeman 1971), by experience in job placement for graduates, or by the attempt to obtain financial support for the college or university. Not infrequently, pressure to conform is regarded as being particularly good for the open admissions colleges, as these are thought to contribute less to the development and preservation of knowledge and thus are felt to require less protection from market pressures in pursuing their objectives.

The growing vocationalism of the last few years, particularly in open admissions colleges (cf. Shulman 1976, p. 30), is sometimes interpreted as a sign of the higher education system's ability to adapt to the needs of society. According to this view, the liberal arts tradition is useful in society's elite, but useless as a preparation for occupations outside of the elite sector. In my conversations the following objections were frequently raised against this notion. In their attempt to offer an education useful for an occupation, it is alleged that many open admissions colleges are less successful than the "proprietary schools" and on-the-job training. It was also argued that the colleges transmit qualifications which industry can use right now, but in the long run this proves to be detrimental to the student. Examples were given as to how absurd manpower requirement studies would be drawn up in order to legitimize existing programs or to change programs, or how attempts to conform to supposed manpower requirements had catastrophic results. Furthermore, any attempt on the part of individual colleges to develop a strategy of response to market requirements runs directly counter to the common justification of universal higher education, namely, that the rising level of education does not promise immediate professional advantages. It is no wonder that many attempts to adjust to the job market often have as their practical result the growth of unrealistic expectations on the part of students with respect to possible occupation advantages. Finally, the increasing job orientation in studies at open admissions colleges lessens the chance that students will change their major or transfer to other colleges.

The extent to which the hierarchy of higher education does or should correspond to the hierarchy of occupations is controversial. First, there is a wealth of empirical evidence to prove that a congruence, occasionally held to exist in part, does not exist in fact. Second, it is contended that so greatly expanded a system of higher education can be justified only if the existing occupational hierarchy is called into question. This might be done by lessening the differences in knowledge and tasks involved in various occupations, as in the notion of "equality of participation" (DeMott 1976); or it might be done through pressure on the occupational system to do away with the occupational hierarchy as far as possible. Third, if the professional hierarchy is widely accepted, but an equalization of life chances is generally proposed, the task of the lower-ranking colleges would lie in being less market oriented than a prestigious college or university might be.

Closely connected with the contribution of the schools to the professional hierarchy is the question of how the system of higher education relates to social stratification. Supporters of existing social inequality generally regard it as a task of education to make possible individual mobility in accordance with individual abilities, and thus secure a high rate of mobility. Critics point out that the possibilities of mobility through higher education, coupled with a correspondence between the social structure of higher education, is a useful way to justify present social inequity as being "just" (e.g. Karabel 1972b; Gintis 1974). Due to the fact that the education system in the U.S. is assigned the task of correcting social injustices on a large-scale basis, more so than in many other countries, the idea that higher education should have an equalizing effect has retained a greater popularity than might be expected in view of the general political climate in the U.S., and particularly in view of the recent shift towards a greater emphasis on social hierarchy.

An important topic of debate on the demands society places on education is the relation between promoting the "universal student" and educating a new generation of elites. As opposed to the already described reflections in favor of promoting the elite, the objection is raised that a society as rich as the U.S. can afford to concern itself with the broad promotion of as many different abilities as possible (cf. the review of the discussion in Wilson 1970). This is considered much more urgent in terms of economic and social development than any special efforts over and above the already excellent opportunities available to the emerging elite. Efforts to integrate students from very different academic and social backgrounds in one institution, as in the case at CUNY, are based upon two additional objectives. Such efforts give colleges an opportunity to use their own experience as a basis for determining how the unit cost per student is to be distributed among the various levels. This also makes it more possible to evaluate educational goals in general, and goals in promoting nontraditional students in particular, than is possible or likely if the emphasis is on "cognitive elitism" (cf. Healy 1975).

This last point brings us to the question of priorities: to what extent should the content of higher education be geared towards advancing an elite or towards educating a wider segment of the population. The question occasionally arises in this context whether in designing the higher education system one should direct more attention to the substantive function of transmitting knowledge or to the selective function.

The opinion is advanced by some that the substantive function is the real one, while the selective function is something which has been forced upon the institution and could damage the meaningful accomplishment of the substantive functions (e.g. Trow 1971). Others maintain that the "quality" argument is mere rhetoric intended to distract attention from the steadily growing importance of the selective function of higher education (Karabel, 1972b). It is indeed remarkable that defenders of the hierarchy in higher education appear to be primarily concerned about the substantive function, whereas advocates of dismantling the hierarchy frequently emphasize the selective function; the opposite would be quite conceivable. But since the defenders of elite education sense that their position is endangered by the prevalence of egalitarian feeling, they can expect to make a stronger impact with the contention that the quality of research, culture and professional activity is at stake.

Advocates of various admissions standards frequently charge their critics with being concerned about the selective function to the exclusion of all other functions (for example, cf. the arguments of Boyer 1977 and Clark 1977 against Astin 1976). This appears to be factually inappropriate because the demand that educational expenditures per student not be distributed unequally according to the level of entering students is just as justifiable as is the demand to promote greater "talents." The factually inappropriate polemic becomes understandable, however, if one proceeds from the fact that the effects of the substantive and functions of higher education are in conflict. Behind this polemic lies the thesis that the substantive function would be better served if the selective function were less in the foreground and the educational process at colleges and universities less molded by problems of selection. The education of elites can be more peaceful when the number of applicants for this sector is held in bounds.

Advocates of a hierarchy in higher education and of highly selective institutions felt themselves particularly on the defensive around 1970 (cf. Wilson 1970, p. 11). In the intervening time, their concern has abated and open admissions is under more pressure to justify itself. Just how successful the defense of the first position has always been, though, and how self-explanatory institutional hierarchy has continued to remain, can be recognized, in my opinion, in a finding already mentioned. Although social mobility is almost nowhere stressed as much as in the U.S., education is regarded as an important means to this goal and an instrument to secure the best opportunities in life. Nonetheless the advocates of the present "diversity" of the higher education system normally succeed in downplaying the differences in rank among institutions while the controversy over the hierarchy in higher education and the varying admissions standards gives the impression of being quite embittered and does not appear to have the importance that one might expect. My conversations in the U.S. gave me the impression that confidence in the societal function of the diversified system of higher education is very widespread.

---

1. This holds true, for example, for the support of different admissions standards and of the hierarchy in higher education made by Wilson (1970) and Boyer (1977), as well as for the critique made by Astin (1976) and Karabel (1972a, b). It does not apply, though, to a concept such as that of Trow, for whom it is primarily a matter of preserving a separate sector for educating elites.

XI
ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

While the prerequisites, criteria and procedures for admission to selective colleges and universities represent a much discussed topic, there is hardly any literature about admission to open admissions colleges which has caught attention outside the narrow circle of admissions officers. Since access is "open," whatever problems arise in connection with the admissions process do not appear to create concern.

At many open admissions colleges, however, the admissions process is by no means taken less seriously or conducted less elaborately than at highly selective institutions for it serves definite functions. In many cases the problem is to recruit a sufficient number of students. The institutions also seek to appeal to the types of students best suited to the character of the college or university. Furthermore, placement often takes place during the admissions process. Finally, admission is often linked with the assessment of the students' abilities and with initial counseling.

Recruitment of Students

Since the number of institutions of higher education having difficulties in finding a sufficient number of students increased during the 1970s, admission has more and more assumed the character of "recruiting." At most schools the greater part of the work done by admissions offices consists of recruiting students.[1] Many admissions officers write to 100 more persons than they finally admit; their staff may visit hundreds of high schools in an academic year. Other promotional measures, such as announcements in the mass media, participation in college fairs, publicity at the individual colleges, are widespread.

Recruitment on the part of admissions offices is neither new nor restricted to institutions which have difficulties in finding a sufficient number of students. As there exist more than 3,000 colleges and universities, the individual institutions have to publicize themselves to become known. Such well-known institutions as the University of Chicago, M.I.T., and Cornell also consider recruitment a very important means of improving the quality of applicants and securing wide geographical representation. But the more the colleges and universities are dependent upon recruitment as a means of securing a sufficient number of students, the more conflicts of interest can develop between institutions and applicants during this process.

Judging by the general-accepted professional image of admissions officers and their activities (e.g. Menacker 1975), such a conflict of interest does not appear to exist. The admissions officer, it is assumed, creates the greatest amount of confidence among school teachers and potential applicants when he provides as much information as possible about the institution he represents and appears to be honest in the process. This is felt to be the best counseling possible. If it is also assumed that there exists an institutional diversity that corresponds well to the varying aptitudes and inclinations of the students, recruitment would then be simply an important part of the information process in a harmonious system designed to guarantee that the colleges and students who suit one another will also find one another. The conclusion one can draw, however, from the information material, conversations, and observations, and the way admissions officers deal with potential applicants, is that this harmonious picture is an illusion. The following reservations appear in order:

- Many schools can secure a sufficient number of students only by giving applicants an unrealistic picture. In such cases, admissions officers are forced to suspend their professional ethics. Admittedly, applicants' motives for studying and their expectations vary widely and often have so little connection with the objectives of higher education that a couple of impressive buildings on campus can actually be decisive for their choice of college. But one must question the honesty of it all when the majority of less prestigious institutions give the impression that the differences in educational quality are not all that great from institution to institution, but that at their campus the student will have a once-in-a-lifetime experience—thanks to a waterfall on campus or an unusual recreation program. It is no wonder that student counselors tend to warn applicants against the information material supplied by the colleges and universities (e.g. Zuker and Hegener 1976, pp. 33-39). One can also see that notwithstanding a federal program to promote honest information on higher education, the recruiting done by the colleges is generally weak in information.
- When in their presentation many open admissions colleges stress distinctive features that are of only marginal importance, it is not surprising that what comes out in the end is a type of advertising that hardly differs from what the detergent industry employs. To name a few examples: by filling out a prize contest form, one can win a partial tuition waiver; whoever recruits a fellow student for the college receives a 50% tuition waiver; a place in a student dormitory is made dependent upon a student's early decision to attend a particular school. Finally, colleges like to dangle scholarships as bait, but only after the student has made his choice and paid his fees does he learn whether he has actually been awarded a scholarship.

- Traveling around the country and recruiting at schools or at college fairs is not an attractive job. Experienced admissions officers are happy when they can delegate these tasks to younger graduates of the college who are happy to have found a job. This means, however, that parents, teachers and potential applicants often receive little solid information in their first direct contact with the college.

Recruitment as a means of securing a sufficient number of students doubtless represents a necessary element in the U.S. admissions system. There are many schools, moreover, which make a great effort to provide applicants with a realistic picture—for example, by helping them to visit the school beforehand to become acquainted with it. Despite all this, the foreign observer gets the impression that people in the U.S. have accustomed themselves to a condition in which a limited amount of academic information and glorified pictures are all a part of the business. Thus, problems of the system of higher education are reduced and transformed into a role conflict of the admissions officers; they have no choice but to see how they can reconcile the pressure for success in recruitment with responsible counseling of applicants. This conflict has undoubtedly intensified in recent years.

Recruitment of Particular Student Populations

That the more highly questionable advertising practices are kept within bounds is due not least to the fact that most open admissions colleges are selective in recruiting students. Indeed, many of them deliberately seek to recruit particular student populations.

Many so-called open admissions institutions can count on more applicants than the number of study slots which they have at their disposal. In such cases, many public colleges and universities dispense with a carefully aimed selection—for example, by admitting on a "first come, first served" basis. Other institutions, particularly the private ones, attempt to address particular groups. Many of them recruit exclusively for applicants whose test scores are above average of those of beginning students at semi-selective institutions; nonetheless one can call them "open admissions colleges" because they rarely turn away applicants. Many of them seek applicants who on the basis of their experience, hobbies etc. suit the character of the college particularly well. In the last two instances named, the operating assumptions are that the students so recruited are more likely to profit from attending this institution and will also probably complete their degrees, and that the college itself can better preserve its specific character through the selection of students.

Thus the open admission colleges, like the more selective institutions but to a lesser degree, are interested in selecting students in order to maintain their individual character. They are technically in a position to do this by means of such instruments as the "Student Search Service" of the College Board or by statements to this effect in their own information materials. It was often emphasized to me in conversations, however, that only a few open admissions institutions are in a position to really carry out a deliberate selection. Normally the reverse was true—that the colleges were obliged to change *their* character in order to fill assumed "market gaps" or to meet the expectations of students already accepted at their institutions. At many institutions which had begun interesting innovative programs, complaints were made that they had been obliged to give up these programs because they were not sufficiently effective for recruiting purposes or were assumed to be the cause of higher student dropout rates. Certainly applicants' expectations function in many cases as a desirable corrective influence upon the institution's program, but the less selective an institution can be, the more it is in danger of adjusting itself to applicants' wishes, the educational value of which is no longer evident.

Placement of Applicants

Many colleges and universities accept practically all applicants to the majority of their departments as long as these students come equipped with the necessary minimum requirements; they set higher admissions standards for their other departments. This holds true in particular for nursing and other semi-professional courses at community colleges, as well as for a number of science majors at four-year colleges. Some colleges require applicants to selective admissions departments to furnish information beyond that which is necessary for general admission. Other colleges employ the same procedure for both types of admission.

The latter practice seems to be more widespread. Thus, many applicants to public open admissions colleges must take part in the admissions tests, although their test score is meaningless for the decision regarding admission. Many schools prefer such a procedure because they consider the requirement of test results as necessary to demonstrate that open admissions colleges also demand quality. They also believe that in this way applicants to a particular institution readily accept a different department than the major field originally desired, or they may wish to use the test results and the services of the test institutes connected with them for other purposes. The charge leveled against this procedure, however, is that many socially disadvantaged students, interested adults, etc., are unnecessarily scared away by such a test requirement.

Regardless of which procedure is chosen, open admissions colleges generally follow the more selective institutions in the way they choose students who want to study subjects for which the competition rate is high. They prefer to emphasize that in contrast to the selective

118

institutions one ought to set more faith in students' potential for development; yet they act quite the same when given an opportunity to make a selection. To a degree they feel forced to do so by outside pressures such as the professional examinations which nurses must take after completing their educational training. The situation is similar in the "university without walls," an open admissions division, which exists at some state universities: since students in this nontraditional program generally are competing with regular students, those in charge feel that they must not deviate too much from normal standards and procedures. It can be assumed that most open admissions schools basically share the admissions philosophy of the selective institutions, and use other practices only because there is less opportunity to select.

The impression is widespread that when they do select students, open admissions colleges ought to pay attention to other characteristics of the applicants than do the selective institutions. Furthermore, there have been a number of interesting experiments on alternative modes of selection where, for example, adult applicants are selected by a committee composed, among others, of students with a similar background of experience. An impediment to such experiments is the fact that in most cases they are not bolstered by the kind of research and information that goes into forming admissions criteria and practices at the selective institutions.

Admissions in Combination with Evaluation and Counseling

At many open admissions institutions the admissions procedure is combined with an intensive evaluation of the prerequisites for study which the applicants possess. On the whole the admissions procedure has an important place in U.S. higher education because it is linked to other tasks of the college or university. Intensive analysis and counseling in connection with admissions to open admissions colleges, nonetheless, seems to be an example in which such a linking of functions also has extraordinarily great significance for the American situation.

To begin with, open admissions colleges in particular are confronted with many applicants who are not sure whether they should study, and who feel unsure in their dealings with the institution. Counseling on the part of the college or university appears to be particularly important in the case of adult applicants—now the majority of applicants to higher education in the U.S.—as these people, unlike recent high school graduates, cannot count upon the help of teachers and guidance counselors at secondary schools. In addition, the open admissions colleges must give students early advice on what remedial courses they must take, what normal courses they can stand up to, what individual help they may need, etc. Otherwise, the "open door" will become a "revolving door."

Many admissions officers assume such tasks and clearly do a good job in carrying them out. Demand is often heard, however, for obligatory counseling of applicants by the colleges to ensure that students have contact with more than just the admissions and financial aid offices before beginning their studies, as is generally the case. Although such an institutionalization of student counseling has obvious disadvantages, such proposals underline the importance attached to the counseling of applicants.

These remarks on the admissions procedure at open admissions colleges and universities show that the procedures are significant for the system of higher education. Whether the open admissions schools can attract "suitable" students, whether the counseling of applicants is good or not, whether the institutions can prevent many beginning students from dropping out by a good evaluation of their abilities—all this surely has considerable bearing on the debate over "universal higher education." The less the institutions succeed in finding satisfactory solutions, the more they must reckon with discrediting the whole idea of an open system of higher education.

It is therefore hard to understand why the discussion on admissions criteria and practices in the U.S. focuses to such a small extent on the open admissions sector. The problems of highly selective institutions are treated intensively, although one can assume that many of the alternatives generally discussed in this context would have a negligible effect on the system of higher education as a whole. On the other hand, problems of admission at open admissions institutions are scarcely discussed although they quite clearly have far-reaching effects.

---

1. The growing dependence of colleges and universities upon recruiting is also increasingly having effects upon the cooperation of admissions officers in their professional organizations. According to one admissions director, such cooperation is becoming increasingly difficult because those whose work consists mainly of recruiting have little in common with those who are mainly concerned with selection.

XII
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me sum up personal impressions of the problems posed by open admission in the U.S. where the system of higher education is so diversified. In observing the broad expansion of the system of higher education—often termed "universal higher education"—one cannot help but be impressed by the richness in ideas, the organizational flexibility, and the manifold services which the colleges have developed for those students who normally do not fit into the traditional milieu of higher education. This holds true even though the limits and the failures of of such efforts are evident. In comparison to discussion in most European countries, it is also remarkable how widely in the U.S. a higher education is accepted as being meaningful for large segments of the population.

At the same time one can only be amazed at what is sold as being a meaningful higher education, all in the name of diversity of the system and the opening of education. One may lament, in one's country, the elitist arrogance with which many adherents of the traditional system reject any opening-up of the universities. All the same, one has the feeling, after observing the situation in the U.S., that in many cases this opening goes too far. There no longer appears to exist any substantive standard of higher education against which the sense and nonsense of the programs offered can be measured. When many colleges and universities can point to practically nothing more substantial than a location in the mountains or horses on campus as evidence of their special character; when schools are ready to give almost everyone practically unlimited credits for occupational experience as long as they pay their fees; when in many cases not even college study can bring a student's knowledge of the three Rs up to high school level; then one cannot help but pose the question whether there should not be limits on what is considered higher education.

As important as it is for colleges to be both willing and able to adjust themselves to the "new" students, the danger remains that higher education for broad segments of the population will become discredited if many institutions subordinate their educational program almost entirely to the effort to offer applicants an education that "sells." It does not solve the problem to call higher education "tertiary" or "postsecondary," as some experts are inclined to do. Nonetheless, two experiences make it clear that it can be immensely important to do away with minimum standards for admission to higher education:

- At an information meeting conducted by the City University of New York, at which several leading representatives candidly discussed that university's experimental reform, there was agreement on one point despite disagreement about open admissions: if it had not been for the hope that open admissions at CUNY sparked in the socially disadvantaged, these students never would have been enrolled there and they would never have been able to receive the further education they so badly needed.
- In many open admissions colleges the integration of very different educational opportunities gives the institution a way to lead students into completely unexpected paths. The person expecting vocational training can be led to a more general type of education; the reverse is also true; persons uncertain as to their goals can try out what appeals to them. A relatively smooth transition from hobby courses to the first steps towards

a scholarly education can lessen "threshold anxiety" at entrance in a way not possible if the path leads through separate institutions.

Regardless of one's position on fixing minimum standards, the debate on public support for higher education would profit considerably if advocates of a maximum opening were prepared to take a more active part in discussion on the limits of a meaningful higher education instead of conjuring up endless benefits of higher education or blindly trusting the system to regulate itself.

The coexistence of open and selective admissions is, for the most part, accepted as being altogether natural in view of specific traditions of U.S. higher education and because of the extent to which it has expanded. This situation can also probably be accepted more easily in the U.S. than in most other countries, since the less prestigious institutions succeed to an amazing degree not only in copying the more famous colleges and universities, but also in developing and preserving an identity of their own.

But the price of this preservation of selective admissions alongside open admissions is so high that the question arises whether it might not be more sensible for as many institutions as possible to allow an even wider "opening-up." First of all, giving misleading information to potential applicants is tantamount to depriving them of their rights as mature persons in one of the most important decisions of their life. Second, the possibility that "mass" higher education can genuinely unfold and develop as long as "cognitive elitism" continues to exist remains limited despite all the impressive experiments and partial successes. Third, a coalition of interests in favor of maintaining the coexistence of selective and open admissions can only be assembled by a general affirmation of the status quo–diversity–which means defense of existing mistakes and imposition of an inhibition on necessary criticism as well as the development of new and productive ideas.

The possibility that the higher education system itself might actively influence development towards "universal higher education" or the system of admissions standards at colleges and universities appears to have narrowed sharply during the 1970s. Generally there has been a decline in support of a reduction of social inequality and in the stimulation of as many people as possible through higher education. A few years ago many representatives of higher education still felt themselves under a supposedly egalitarian pressure from society—a pressure which nonetheless left the colleges ample opportunity for shaping developments. Now many schools feel abandoned by society in their efforts in behalf of nontraditional students.

Social inequality and differences in native ability are again being emphasized—more so than in the 1960s. Changes of symbolic significance such as the abolition of free tuition at CUNY, and a multitude of changes in financing, admissions, and public propaganda convey this. A country which sparked discussion on equality of opportunity in many other countries has itself become weary of this topic. Whatever reservation had always existed, it does not need to be held back any more.

It is naturally difficult to estimate on the basis of a brief period of observation what has brought about this change in mood. Along with the financial crises, the failures of educational experiments, the job-market problems, etc., one reason stood out in many interviews. Despite all the emphasis on the importance of the diversity of the system of higher education, there seemed to be considerable anxiety that the removal of social selection mechanisms in the educational system might weaken the strong normative integrating force which education has had in American society. And perhaps it is the representatives of higher education with their overuse of the "diversity" slogan who have contributed most to the sharp change in public opinion on open admissions.

Despite all the criticism of problems in higher education of which I heard while in the U.S., the hope in the societal function of the present diversity of the system is so great that transforming the criticism into far-reaching reform appears to be out of the question. When a conversation partner with misty eyes and a missionary tone of voice thrusts into one's hands Burton Clark's article "The Benefits of Disorder" (1976), and when one experiences the repeated contrast of intelligent criticism and boundless faith in the harmony of the system, then the outside observer cannot help but feel annoyed to discover that sentences such as the following have achieved the status of confessions of faith: "The diversity of American higher education is universally regarded as one of its main sources of strength, reflecting the pluralism in the larger society. A diverse educational system affords students a wider choice, is best able to meet the highly distinct needs of a pluralistic society, and should be most adaptable as these needs change." (Carnegie Foundation 1975, p. 125)

Each society has its own specific character. The U.S. system of higher education has certain market elements and other characteristics such as a large-scale decentralization of decisions which the observer is quite prepared to accept with all their strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, the weaknesses of a system of higher education which stresses centralized planning are all too evident to allow one to lapse into what I like to call comparative chauvinism. When one sees, however, to what a great extent meaningful criticism in the U.S. is hampered in its effectiveness by the belief in the strength of the existing order and is undermined by tautological rhetoric regarding such functionality, one comes to fear that the system of higher education in the United States is becoming a victim of its own propaganda. At a time when it is exposed to adverse winds, higher education in the U.S. may be making it especially hard for itself to develop convincing concepts for the future.

REFERENCES

Abel, E.K., *Social Equality in Mass Higher Education: Connecticut Community Colleges.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, Institution for Social and Policy Studies, 1976.

Aleamoni, Lawrence M., *Results of a Questionnaire on Selection, Placement, and Proficiency Procedures at American Colleges and Universities, 1966-1967.* Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois, Office of Instructional Resources, 1968.

Alexander, Karl L. and Bruce K. Eckland, "High School Context and College Selectivity: Institutional Constraints in Educational Stratification." Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1976, mimeograph.

Alfred, Richard L., *Impacts of the Community and Junior College on Students.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, (no date).

American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, ed., "Fact Sheet on Two-Year Colleges." Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1976, mimeograph.

American College Testing Program, ed., *Student Test Booklet (Form B) for the Assessment of Career Development.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1972.

—, *Assessing Students on the Way to College,* Vol. 1 and 2. Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1972/73.

—, *A Guide for Increasing Student Career Development: Supplement 1 to Preliminary Handbook for the ACT Assessment of Career Development.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1973 a.

—, *Handbook for the ACT Assessment of Career Development* (Preliminary Edition). Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1973/76.

—, *Highlights of the ACT Technical Report.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1973 c.

—, *Your College-Bound Students: Interpretive Guide to the ACT High School Profile Service.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1974.

American College Testing Program, ed., *Your College Freshmen: Interpretive Guide to ACT Research Services for Higher Education*. Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1975.

—, *The ACT Interest Inventory and Student Profile Section*. Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1976 b.

—, *ACT Proficiency Examination Program (PEP): Book of Syllabuses*. Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1976 c.

—, *College Planning/Search Book: 1976-77 Edition*. Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1976 d.

—, *Using ACT on the Campus*. Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1976 e.

American Medical College Application Service, ed., *AMCAS Instruction Booklet for 1977-78 Entering Class*. Washington, D.C.: American Medical College Application Service, 1976.

Anderson, G. Lester, *Trends in Education for the Professions*. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1974 (ERIC Higher Education Research Report, No. 7/1974).

Angoff, William H., ed., *The College Board Admissions Testing Program: A Technical Report on Research and Development Activities Relating to the Scholastic Aptitude Test and Achievement Tests*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1971.

Assessment in a Pluralistic Society: Proceedings of the 1972 Invitational Conference on Testing Problems. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1973.

Association of American Medical Colleges, ed., *Medical School Admission Requirements 1977-78, United States and Canada*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Medical Colleges, 1976.

Astin, Alexander W., "The Myth of Equal Access in Public Higher Education." Los Angeles, Cal.: University of California, Los Angeles, 1976 a, mimeograph.

—, *Preventing Students from Dropping Out*. San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey-Bass, 1976 b.

Astin, Alexander W., Marc R. King, and G.T. Richardson, *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1976*. Los Angeles, Cal.: American Council on Education, University of California, 1976 (Cooperative Institutional Research Program).

Astin, Helen S. and A.S. Bisconti, *Trends in Academic and Career Plans of College Freshmen.* Bethlehem, Pa.: CPC Foundation, 1972 (Report No. 1).

—, *Career Plans of College Graduates of 1965 and 1970.* Bethlehem, Pa.: CPC Foundation, 1973 (Report No. 2).

Bailey, Stephen K., "Egalitarianism versus Meritocracy in U.S. Higher Education: Curricular Manifestations," in Philip G. Altbach, ed., *The University's Response to Societal Demands.* New York: International Council for Educational Development, 1975, 127-140.

Baird, Leonard L., *The Undecided Student—How Different is He?* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1967 (ACT Research Report, No. 22).

Baird, Leonard L. and James M. Richards, Jr., *The Effects of Selecting College Students by Various Kinds of High School Achievement.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1968 (ACT Research Report, No. 23).

Baird, Leonard L. and John L. Holland, *The Flow of High School Students to Schools, and Jobs.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1968 (ACT Research Report, No. 26).

Beals, Ernest W., "A Report on the Policies, Practices, and Procedures in the Admission of Students to Public Higher Education Institutions in the State of Massachusetts." Amherst, Mass., 1976, mimeograph, paper presented to the German-U.S. Study Group.

Bell, Daniel, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society.* New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Berg, Ivan, *Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery.* New York: Praeger, 1970.

Berger, Brigette, "The Coming Age of People Work," in *Change.* 8 (No. 4, 1975), 24-30.

Bird, Caroline, *The Case Against College.* New York: McKay, 1975.

Birnenbaum, William M., "Something for Everybody is not Enough," in W. Todd Furniss, ed., *Higher Education for Everybody? Issues and Implications.* Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1971, 65-82.

Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis, "IQ in the United States Class Structure," in A. Gartner, C. Greer and F. Riesman, eds., *The New Assault on Equality: I.Q. and Social Stratification.* New York: Harper and Row, 1974, 7-84.

Bowman, Mary Jane and C. Arnold Anderson, *Mass Higher Education: Some Perspectives in the United States.* Paris: OCED, 1974.

Britell, Jenne K. and William B. Schrader, "College Admissions Testing in the United States," in *Access Policy and Procedures and the Law in U.S. Higher Education.* New York: International Council for Educational Development, 1978.

Brue, Eldon J., Harold B. Engen and E. James Maxey, *How do Community College Transfer and Occupational Students Differ?* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1971 (ACT Research Report, No. 41).

Burn, Barbara B., "Access to Higher Education in the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States," in *International Review of Education.* 22 (No. 2, 1976), 193-201.

—, ed., *Access, Systems, Youth and Employment: International Perspectives on Problems of Higher Education.* New York: International Council for Educational Development, 1977 a (Conference Papers No. 4).

Carbone, Robert F., et al., *Students and State Borders: Fiscal/Legal Issues Affecting Nonresident Students.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1973.

Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *The Open-door Colleges: Policies for Community Colleges.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971 a.

—, *Less Time, More Options: Education beyond the High School, A Special Report and Recommendations.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971 a.

—, *New Students and New Places—Policies for the Future Growth and Development of American Higher Education.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971 b.

—, *College Graduates and Jobs: Adjusting to a New Labor Market Situation.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973 a.

—, *Continuity and Discontinuity.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973 b.

—, *Higher Education: Who Pays? Who Benefits? Who Should Pay?* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973 c.

—, *Priorities for Action: Final Report.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973 d.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *More than Survival: Prospects for Higher Education in a Period of Uncertainty. A Commentary with Recommendations.* San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey-Bass, 1975.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *Decisions and Outcomes: A Leader's Guide*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1973.

Cerych, Ladislav and Dorotea Furth, "The Search for a Global System: Unity and Disparity of Post-secondary Education," in Brian Holmes and D. Scanlon, eds., *Higher Education in a Changing World: The World Year Book of Education 1971/72*. London: Evans, 1971, 108-119.

Clark, Burton R., "The 'Cooling-out' Function in Higher Education," in *American Journal of Sociology*. 65 (1960), 569-576.

—, "The Benefits of Disorder," in *Change*. 8 (No. 10, 1976), 31-37.

Cohen, Arthur M., John Lombardi and Florence B. Brawer, *College Responses to Community Demands*. San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey-Bass, 1975.

Coleman, James S., "The Concept of Equality of Educational Opportunity," in *Harvard Educational Review*. 38 (No. 1, 1968), 7-37.

—, "Equality of Opportunity and Equality of Results," in *Harvard Educational Review*. 43 (No. 1, 1973), 129-137.

College Entrance Examination Board, ed., *College Admissions Policies for the 1970s: Papers delivered at the Colloquium on College Admissions Policies, Interlochen, Michigan, June 18-23, 1967*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1968.

—, *College-Bound Seniors, 1974-75*. New York: CEEB, 1974 (Admissions Testing Program of the College Entrance Examination Board).

—, *1975 PSAT/NMSQT Student Bulletin*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1975.

—, *Career Skills Assessment Program*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1976 a.

—, *Guide for High Schools and Colleges, 1976-77*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1976b (Admissions Testing Program of the College Entrance Examination Board).

Conrad, Clifton and Joseph Cosand, *The Implications of Federal Education Policy*. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1976 (ERIC Higher Education Research Report, No. 1/1976).

Corcoran, Thomas B., "Community Colleges: The Coming Slums of Higher Education?" in *Change*. 4 (No. 7, 1972), 30-35.

Coupland, D.E., "Aptitude Tests and Discrimination," in *International Labour Review*. 102 (No. 3, 1970), 241-253.

Cross, K. Patricia, *Beyond the Open Door.* San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey-Bass, 1971.

Cunnane, Mary E., *Recent Trends in Medical Education: Report of a Survey.* New York: Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, 1976.

Davis, James A., "Background Characteristics in the U.S. Adult Population 1952-1973: A Survey-Metric Model," in *Social Science Research.* 5 (1976), 349-383.

Dresch, Stephen T., "Educational Saturation: A Demographic-Economic Model," in *AAUP Bulletin.* (Autumn,1975), 239-247.

—, "Human Capital and Economic Growth: Retrospect and Prospect." New Haven, Conn.: Institute for Demographic and Economic Studies, 1976, mimeograph.

Dressel, Paul L., ed., *The New Colleges: Toward an Appraisal.* Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program and the Association for Higher Education, 1971 (Monograph Seven).

Drucker, Mark L., "Getting In," in *The New York Times Magazine.* (April 18, 1976), 37-46.

Educational Testing Service, ed., *A Computer-based System of Interactive Guidance & Information.* Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1975.

—, *GRE 1976-77 Information Bulletin, Graduate Record Examinations and Minority Graduate Student Locater.* Princeton, N.J.: 1976.

Farell, Joseph, "Review Symposium: Jencks and Inequality," in *Comparative Education Review.* 18 (No. 3, 1974), 430-405.

Ferguson, Richard L. and E. James Maxey, *Trends in the Academic Performance of High School and College Students.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1976 (ACT Research Report, No. 70).

Fife, Jonathan D., *Applying the Goals of Student Financial Aid.* Washington, D.C.: American Association of Higher Education, 1975 (ERIC Higher Education Research Report, No. 10/1975).

Folger, John K., Helen S. Astin and Allen E. Bayer, *Human Resources and Higher Education.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970.

Freeman, Richard B., *The Market for College-Trained Manpower: A Study in the Economics of Career Choice.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

Freeman, Richard B., *The Over-Educated American.* New York: Academic Press, 1976.

Freeman, Richard B. and J. Herbert Hollomon, "The Declining Value of College Going," in *Change.* 7 (No. 8, 1975), 24-31, 62.

Furniss, W. Todd, ed., *Higher Education for Everybody? Issues and Implications.* Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1971.

Furth, Dorotea, "Short-Cycle Higher Education: Some Basic Considerations," in *Short-Cycle Higher Education.* Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1973, 12-42.

Gelatt, H.B., B. Varenhorst, R. Carey and Gordon P. Midler, *Decisions and Outcomes.* New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1973.

Golladay, Mary A., *The Conditions of Education: 1976 Edition.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics, 1976.

Gordon, Edmund W., *Opportunity Programs for the Disadvantaged in Higher Education.* Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1975 (ERIC Higher Education Research Report, No. 6/1975).

Gordon, Margaret S., ed., *Higher Education and the Labor Market: A Volume of Essays Sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974.

Grant, W. Vance and C. George Lind, *Digest of Education Statistics: 1975 Edition.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics, 1976.

Hamilton, Richard and James Wright, "Coming of Age—A Comparison of the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany," in *Zeitschrift für Soziologie.* 4 (1975), 335-349.

Hanson, Gary R., *Assessing the Career Interests of College Youth: Summary of Research and Applications.* Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program, 1974 (ACT Research Report, No. 67).

Harnischfeger, Annegret and David E. Wiley, *Achievement Test Score Decline: Do We Need to Worry?* Chicago, Ill.: CEMREL, Inc., 1976.

Harrington, Michael, "Keep Open Admissions Open," in *The New York Times Magazine.* (November 2, 1975).

Healy, Timothy S., "New Problems–New Hopes," in *Change*. 5 (No. 6, 1973), 24-29.

Hechinger, Fred M., "Who Killed Free Tuition?" in *The New York Times Magazine*. (May 23, 1976).

Hecquet, Ignace, Christiane Verniers and Ladislav Cerych, *Recent Student Flows in Higher Education: A Report of the Institute of Education of the European Cultural Foundation.* New York: International Council for Educational Development, 1976.

Hitchcock, James, "The New Vocationalism," in *Change*. 5 (No. 3, 1973), 46-50.

Hitpass, Joseph et al., "Vorschläge für ein 'Besonderes Hochschuleingangsverfahren' (§33 HRG) unter Berücksichtigung der von einer Expertenkommission in den USA gesammelten Erfahrungen. Gutachtliche Stellungnahme für das Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft." Bonn: Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft, 1975, mimeograph.

Holland, John L. and James M. Richards, Jr., *Academic and Non-Academic Accomplishment: Correlated or Uncorrelated?* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1965 (ACT Research Report, No. 2).

Holland, John L. and Douglas R. Whitney, *Changes in the Vocational Plans of College Students: Orderly or Random?* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1968 (ACT Research Report, No. 25).

Hoyt, Donald P., *The Relationship between College Grades and Adult Achievement: A Review of the Literature*. Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1965 (ACT Research Report, No. 7).

Huff, Sheila, "Credentialing by Tests or by Degrees: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and Griffs v. Duke Power Company," in *Harvard Educational Review*. 44 (No. 2, 1974), 246-269.

Husén, Torsten, "Strategies for Educational Equality." Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1974 (DAS/EID/74.49), mimeograph.

—, "The Equality-Meritocracy Dilemma in Higher Education," in Philip G. Altbach, ed., *The University's Response to Societal Demands*. New York: International Council for Educational Development, 1975, 13-39.

Irby, Alice J., "A Review of Admissions Policies and Practices," in *Access Policy and Procedures and the Law in U.S. Higher Education*. New York: International Council for Educational Development, 1978.

Jackson, Gregory A. and George B. Weathersby, "Individual Demand for Higher Education: A Review and Analysis of Recent Empirical Studies," in *Journal of Higher Education.* 46 (No. 6, 1975), 623-652.

Jencks, Christopher et al., *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America.* New York: Basic Books, 1972.

Jenny, Hans H., *Higher Education and the Economy.* Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1976 (ERIC Higher Education Research Report, No. 2/1976).

Karabel, Jerome, "Community Colleges and Social Stratification," in *Harvard Educational Review.* 42 (No. 4, 1972 a), 521-562.

—, "Open Admissions: Toward Meritocracy or Democracy," in *Change.* (No. 13, 1972 b), 38-43.

—, "Perspectives on Open Admission," in *Educational Record.* 53 (No. 1, 1972 c), 30-44.

—, "Higher Education, Class Structure, and the Labor Market." Cambridge, Mass.: Center for the Study of Public Policy, 1976, mimeograph.

Karabel, Jerome and Alexander W. Astin, "Social Class, Academic Ability and College 'Quality'," in *Social Forces.* 53 (No. 3, 1975), 381-398.

Karabel, Jerome and Albert H. Halsey, eds., *Power and Ideology in Education.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1977 b.

Karpen, Ulrich, "University Admission Criteria: Some German-American Comparative Observations," in *International Review of Education.* 22 (No. 2, 1976), 203-221.

Kaufman, Barry and R. Botwinick, *Student Retention and Graduation at the City University of New York: Fall 1970 to Spring 1974.* New York: City University of New York, Office of Program and Policy Research, 1975.

Keochakian, Simon V., "Nonintellectual Factors Used in College Admissions: A Selective Review of the Literature," in *Access Policy and Procedures and the Law in U.S. Higher Education.* New York: International Council for Educational Development, 1978.

Kesselman, Judi R., *Stopping Out: A Guide to Leaving College and Getting Back In.* New York: Evans, 1976.

Kirschenbaum, Howard, Rodney W. Napier and Sidney B. Simon, *Wad-ja-get? The Grading Game in American Education.* New York: Hart, 1971.

Koerner, Thomas and Martha A. Crawford, eds., *Rank-in-Class: A Report with Guidelines, Comments, and Case Studies.*

Washington, D.C.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1972 (NASSP Bulletin, 56, No. 365).

Kollatz, Udo, *Qualität trotz Cleichheit? Aktuelle Probleme der deutschen Hochschulreform im Lichte Amerikas.* Frankfurt a.M.: Diesterweg, 1973.

Lavin, David E., *The Prediction of Academic Performance: A Theoretical Analysis and Review of Research.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1965.

Lenning, Oscar T., *The "Benefits Crisis" in Higher Education.* Washington, D.C.: The American Association for Higher Education 1974 (ERIC Higher Education Research Report No. 1/ 1974).

—, *Predictive Validity of the ACT Tests at Selective Colleges.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1975 (ACT Research Report, No. 69).

Lenning, Oscar T., et al., *Nonintellective Correlates of Grades, Persistence, and Academic Learning in College: The Published Literature Through the Decade of the Sixties.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1974 a (Educational Programs and Services, Monograph 14).

—, *The Many Faces of College Success and their Nonintellective Correlates: The Published Literature Through the Decade of the Sixties.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1974 (Educational Programs and Services, Monograph 15).

Littmann, Ulrich, *USA: Studium in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika.* Bonn: Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, 1974.

Maeroff, Gene I., *"City U.: Open Admissions Held a Success,"* in *The New York Times.* (March 17, 1974).

—, "Writing Test for College Urged," in *The New York Times.* (Jan. 25, 1976).

McCaffrey, Kenneth J. and Elaine King, eds., *College Career Choice: Right Time, Right Place.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1973 (Educational Programs and Services, Monograph 9).

McMahon, Walter W. and Alan P. Wagner, *A Study of the College Investment: Project Report I.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1973 (ACT Research Report, No. 59).

Medsker, Leland L. and Dale Tillery, *Breaking the Access Barriers: A Profile of Two-Year Colleges.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Menacker, Julius, *From School to College: Articulation and Transfer.* Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1975.

Merelman, Richard M., "Social Stratification and Political Socialization in Mature Industrial Societies," in *Comparative Education Review.* 19 (No. 1, 1975), 13-30.

Meyer, Peter, *Awarding College Credit for Non-College Learning.* San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey-Bass, 1976.

Miller, Seymour M., "Social Mobility and Equality." Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1974, mimeograph.

—, "Types of Equality: Sorting, Rewarding, Performing." a Position Paper prepared for "Education, Inequality, and National Policy—a National Policy Conference Sponsored by the George Gund Foundation, Cleveland, Ohio and the Curriculum Research and Development Center, University of Rhode Island." Boston, Mass., August, 1975, mimeograph.

Monroe, Charles R., *Profile of the Community College: A Handbook.* San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey-Bass, 1973.

Munday, Leo A. and Jeanne C. Davis, *Varieties of Accomplishment After College: Perspectives on the Meaning of Academic Talent.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1974 (ACT Research Report, No. 62).

Nicholson, Everard, *Predictors of Graduation from College.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1973 (ACT Research Report, No. 56).

The Office of Admission Services of the City University of New York, *The City University of New York: A Guide to Admissions 1977.* New York, July 1976.

O'Toole, James, "The Reserve Army of the Underemployed," in *Change.* 7 (1975), No. 4, 26-33; No. 5, 60-63.

Parker, Garland G., *Career Education and Transfer Program Enrollments in 2-Year Colleges, 1974-75.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1975 (ACT Special Report 15).

—, *Collegiate Enrollments in the U.S. 1975-76: Statistics, Interpretation and Trends in 4-Year and Related Institutions.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1976.

Patchways to Quality: 1975 ETS Annual Report. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1976.

Piesco, J.J. and Lawrence Podell, *Retention and Graduation of Disadvantaged Students in the Senior Colleges of CUNY.* New

York; City University of New York, Office of Program and Policy Research, 1977.

Piesco, J.J., I. Shrier and Lawrence Podell, *Review of the Evaluative Literature on Open Admissions at CUNY.* New York: City University of New York, Office of Program and Policy Research, 1974.

Podell, Lawrence and Barry Kaufman, *Admission-Retention Criteria and Academic Performance.* New York: City University of New York, Office of Program and Policy Research, 1976.

Prediger, Dale J., John D. Roth and Richard J. Noeth, *Nationwide Study of Student Career Development: Summary of Results.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1973 (ACT Research Report, No. 61).

Rever, Philip R., ed., *Open Admissions and Equal Access.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1971 (Monograph 4).

Richards, James M., Jr., and Sandra W. Lutz, *Predicting Student Accomplishment in College from the ACT Assessment.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1967 (ACT Research Report, No. 21).

Roueche, John E., Barton R. Herrscher and George A. Baker III, *Time As the Variable, Achievement As the Constant: Competency Based Instruction in the Community College.* Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1976.

Schott, Erich and Ulrike Schott, *Zur psychosozialen Struktur von Studienanfängern der Medizin: Sozialisationsstudie zur Frage Auswirkungen des Auslesesystems.* Hamburg: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Hochschuldidaktik, 1975 (Hochschuldidaktische Forschungsberichte, No. 2).

Schumann, Karl F. and Hans J. Claus, *Prognose des Studienerfolgs.* Hamburg: Arbeitskreis Hochschuldidaktik, 1970 (Blickpunkt Hochschuldidaktik, No. 10).

Scott, Craig S., Robert H. Fenske and E. James Maxey, *Vocational Choice Change Patterns of a National Sample of Community-Junior College Students.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1974 (ACT Research Report, No. 64).

The Second Newman Report: National Policy and Higher Education. Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1973.

Sewell, William H. and Robert M. Hauser, *Education, Occupation and Earnings: Achievement in the Early Career.* New York: Academic Press, 1975.

Sexton, Robert F. and Richard A. Ungerer, *Rationales for Experimental Education.* Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1975 (ERIC Higher Education Research Report, No. 3/1975).

Shertzer, Bruce and Shelley C. Stone, eds., *Introduction to Guidance: Selected Readings.* Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

Shulman, Carol H., *Enrollment Trends in Higher Education.* Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1976 (ERIC Higher Education Research Report, No. 6/1976).

Siddiqui, Nigar J., "Access to Public Higher Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts" (prepared for the International Council for Educational Development). Amherst, Mass.: 1976 mimeograph.

Simon, Kenneth A. and Martin M. Frankel, *Projections of Education Statistics to 1984-85.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics, 1976.

Snyder, Douglas S., "The Cooling-in Process in Small Colleges," in *Journal of Higher Education.* 43 (No. 5, 1972), 361-368.

Solmon, Lewis C., *Schooling and Subsequent Success: Influence of Ability, Background, and Formal Education. A Review of the Literature and Extensions.* Iowa City, Iowa: American College Testing Program, 1973 (ACT Research Report, No. 57).

Solmon, Lewis C. and Paul Wachtel, "The Effects on Income of Type of College Attended," in *Sociology of Education.* 48 (Winter 1975), 75-90.

Stampen, J. and Allen W. Ostar, eds., *Patterns in Undergraduate Enrollment Growth Among State Colleges and Universities 1969-1974.* Washington, D.C.: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1976.

State University of New York, *Your 1977 Information and Application for Admission to SUNY.* Albany, N.Y., 1976.

Taubman, Paul and Terence Wales, *Higher Education and Earnings.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974.

Teichler, Ulrich, "Some Aspects of Higher Education in Japan," in *KBS Bulletin on Japanese Culture* (Tokyo). (No. 114, June-July 1972), 1-16.

Teichler, Ulrich, "University Reform and Skeleton Legislation on Higher Education in the Federal Republic of Germany: Key Points and Problems in the Reform Efforts," in *Western European Education.* 4 (No. 3, 1972), 224-238.

—, "University Reform and Skeleton Legislation on Higher Education in the Federal Republic of Germany: Breakdown of the Skeleton Legislation on Higher Education," in *Western European Education.* 5 (No. 4, 1973-74), 34-55.

—, *Das Dilemma der modernen Bildungsgesellschaft: Japans Hochschulen unter den Zwängen der Statuszuteilung.* Stuttgart: Klett, 1976 a.

—, "Problems of West German Universities on the Way to Mass Higher Education," in *Western European Education.* 8 (Nos. 1-2, 1976 b), 81-120.

Trivett, David A., *Goals for Higher Education: Definitions and Directions.* Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1973 (ERIC Higher Education Research Report, No. 6/1973).

Trow, Martin, "Reflections on the Transition from Mass to Universal Higher Education," in *Daedalus.* 90 (No. 1, 1970), 1-42.

—, "Notes on American Higher Education: Planning for Universal Access in the Context of Uncertainty," in *Higher Education.* 4 (No. 1, 1975), 1-11.

U.S. Department of Labor, ed., *Educational Attainment of Workers; March 1975.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1975 (Special Labor Force Report No. 186).

The University of the State of New York, *College Proficiency Examinations: Regents External Degrees.* Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York, 1975.

Vermilye, Dyckman W., ed., *Individualizing the System: Current Issues in Higher Education 1976.* San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey-Bass, 1976.

Wattenbarger, James L. and Bob N. Cage, *More Money for More Opportunity.* San Francisco, Cal.: Jossey-Bass, 1974.

Watts, Susan F., ed., *The College Handbook.* New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1975.

Weidlein, Edwin R., "What's Wrong with College Admissions? A Survey of Problem Areas," in *Education Digest.* 37 (No. 4, 1971), 35-38.

Weinberg, Carl, *Education is a Shuck: How the Educational System is Failing Our Children.* New York: Morrow, 1975.

Willingham, Warren W., *Free-Access Higher Education*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1970.

Willingham, Warren W., Richard I. Ferrin and E. P. Begle, *Career Guidance in Secondary Education*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1972.

Willingham, Warren W. and Nurhan Findikyan, *Patterns of Admission for Transfer Students*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1969.

Wilson, Logan, "Merit and Equality in Higher Education," in *Educational Record*. 51 (No. 1, 1970), 5-13.

Wilson, Logan and Olive Mills, eds., *Universal Higher Education: Costs, Benefits, Options*. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1972.

Windham, Douglas M., "The Economics of Higher Education," in Philip G. Altbach, ed., *Comparative Higher Education Abroad: Bibliography and Analysis*. New York: Praeger, 1976, 183-221.

Yarmolinsky, Adam, "Challenges to Legitimacy: Dilemmas and Directions," in *Change*. 8 (No. 4, 1976), 18-25.

Zigerell, James J., "The Community College in Search of an Identity," in *Journal of Higher Education*. 41 (No. 9, 1970), 701-712.

Zuker, R. Fred and Karen C. Hegener, eds., *Peterson's Guide to College Admissions: How to Put the Odds on Your Side*. New York: Monarch Press, 1976.

APPENDIX

Study Group Membership

Dr. James A. Perkins, Study Group Chairman
Chairman, International Council for Educational Development.

Professor Barbara B. Burn, Study Group Director
Director, International Programs, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Professor Horst Bahro, Pädagosche Hochschule Rheinland, Cologne.

Dr. Willi Becker
Director General, Ministry for Higher Education and Research, North Rhine Westfalia, Düsseldorf.

Dr. Eberhard Böning
Director General for Higher Education, Federal Ministry for Education and Science, Germany.

John Z. Bowers, M.D.
President, Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation.

Professor Frank Bowles (deceased 1975)
Consultant, International Council for Educational Development.

Dr. Ladislav Cerych
Director, Institute of Education, European Cultural Foundation, Paris.

Mrs. Gertraud Hasemann, Germany Study Group Coordinator.

Dr. Karl G. Hasemann (deceased 1975)
Secretary General, Federal-State Commission for Educational Planning

Dr. Clark Kerr
  Chairman, Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education.

Professor Hans Leussink, Karlsruhe University.

Professor Larry Simon
  Law Center, University of Southern California.

Dr. William W. Turnbull
  President, Educational Testing Service.

International Council for Educational Development

Publications of

GERMAN-U.S. STUDY GROUP ON ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Recent Student Flows in Higher Education Ignace Hecquet, Christiane Verniers, and Ladislav Cerych, 1976	$ 2.50
Barriers to Higher Education in the Federal Republic of Germany Willi Becker, 1977 (Written in 1976)	$ 2.00
Admission to Medical Education in Ten Countries Barbara B. Burn, editor, 1978	$ 6.00
Admission to Higher Education in the United States: A German Critique Ulrich Teichler, 1978	$ 5.00
Innovations in Access to Higher Education: Ontario, Canada; England and Wales; and Sweden Robert M. Pike, Naomi E.S. McIntosh, and Urban Dahllöf, 1978	$10.00
Access Policy and Procedure and the Law in U.S. Higher Education Jenne K. Britell, William B. Schrader, Alice J. Irby, Simon V. Keochakian, and Larry Simon, 1978	$ 6.00
Access to Higher Education: Two Perspectives. A Comparative Study of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America Final Report of the German-U.S. Study Group, 1978	$ 2.50

Distributed by
Interbook Inc., 13 East 16th Street, New York, New York 10003